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14. ABSTRACT This report presents findings from the 2015 Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (2015 FGSAPR) study, which collected qualitative feedback from military members through focus groups using trained moderators to facilitate discussion on these topics. The 2015 FGSAPR was generated in response to ongoing National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requirements and guidance from a Secretary of Defense Directive (Secretary of Defense, 2014). The Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC) within the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) was tasked with this effort. The goal of the 2015 FGSAPR effort was to engage in small group discussions with military members across the Department of Defense (DoD) on issues related to sexual assault. These structured discussions were designed to better understand how recent changes in sexual assault policies and programs have impacted military members and their workplace environment, as well as, address the military's climate of sexual assault response and prevention.					
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2015 FOCUS GROUPS ON SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AMONG ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS

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SAPRO policy officials contributing to the development of focus group protocol include Dr. Nathan Galbreath. Service officials contributing to the development and administration of this assessment include Mr. Nick DeMarco (Army), Mr. Paul Rosen and CAPT James Little (Navy), Dr. Paul Garst (Department of Navy, SAPRO), Mr. James Thompson (Air Force), as well as Ms. Melissa Cohen and Dr. Jessica Zabecki (Marine Corps). We would like to thank all of the Service representatives and points of contact at each installation that assisted us in organizing and executing the focus groups.

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Executive Summary

The *2015 Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Among Active Duty Members (2015 FGSAPR)* is part of an assessment cycle of the active duty force starting in 2015 that consists of alternating surveys and focus groups: the surveys provide valid statistical information about prevalence rates and members' perception on issues related to unwanted gender-related behaviors; the focus groups provide deeper insights into the dynamics behind the survey results and help better understand potential emerging trends. Together they help Department leaders and Service policy makers assess the effectiveness of programs and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, each type of assessment informs the other. For example, survey results are used to identify topics for deeper discussion during the focus groups and the focus groups identify new topics and questions to be asked on the surveys.

This focus group study assessed active duty members' perception of issues related to sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other gender-related topics across the four Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force). In total, over 450 active duty members across all four Services participated in the focus groups. Themes provided in this report are qualitative in nature and cannot be generalized to the full population of active duty military Service members. Themes should be considered as the attitudes and opinions of focus group participants only.

The Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC) within the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) was tasked with both the scientific Gender Relations survey as well as the focus group study. For over 25 years, RSSC has been DoD's lead organization for conducting impartial scientific survey and focus group research on a number of topics of interest to the Department, including focus groups related to sexual assault prevention and response at the Military Service Academies (MSAs) and the *2014 Department of Defense Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (2014 FGSAPR; Rock, Van Winkle, Hurley, & Namrow, 2014)* presented in the *Department of Defense Report to the President of the United States on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPRO, 2014)*.

Focus Group Methodology

DMDC follows standard, scientific methods that are widely used in the survey industry for data collections across a variety of domains. Focus group methodology employs these standards for qualitative research to collect subjective information from participants on a limited number of topics. The methods are similar to those that have been successfully used by DMDC for a number of years to conduct Congressionally-directed focus groups related to sexual assault issues at the three DoD MSAs (DMDC, 2013a). The methodology for the *2015 FGSAPR* was consistent across locations. Although the results cannot be generalized to the full military population, they provide general observations, insights into issues and identify areas for further consideration, as appropriate.

Participation in the *2015 FGSAPR* was voluntary. Participants were selected at each installation, within clusters defined by gender and paygrade, and offered the opportunity to participate. Rosters of Service members were randomized by DMDC according to these clusters and returned to each respective installation for participant notification. This process ensures

randomization of participants and maximizes impartiality. Additional information on participant selection can be found in Chapter 1.

Each focus group session was scheduled for 90 minutes. All focus group sessions were governed by a number of ground rules, most notably that they were non-attribution, voluntary sessions. DMDC provided two trained facilitators and a professional court reporter for each session. DMDC moderated focus groups with trained focus group facilitators leading dual-moderated sessions. Facilitators followed a structured, approved interview protocol to ensure consistency of questions across Services, topics were covered in an adequate amount of time, and conversations were appropriately contained. Questions and topics on the protocol were constructed based on prior scientific survey results and areas of interest to the Department and military Services.

Installation staff members, such as Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) or Victim Advocates (VAs), were excluded from the room during the focus group session, although they were available if a participant experienced distress during a session or wanted to follow up on a matter after the session. Audio and video recordings were not allowed, and there were no individually identifiable records. Due to these procedures, no link between an individual respondent and their responses was possible. Only selected comments that have had identifiers removed have been included in the final report to illustrate findings, but maintain the anonymity of participants. This focus group study was reviewed by a DoD Human Research Protection Program Officer and was approved through the DoD Internal Information Collection process.

Data from the focus groups were analyzed qualitatively for major themes and ideas conveyed across the sessions. Themes are only presented if there was support across all DoD Services. As mentioned, the results in this study are based on qualitative analysis—findings cannot be generalized to all military members. Findings should be viewed as illustrations of situations and themes and as a general perspective on members' views of unwanted gender-related behaviors at their base/installation, but they do not portray a statistical report on prevalence rates or quantitative evaluation of prevention and response programs.

Summary of Themes from the 2015 FGSAPR

The *2015 FGSAPR* was conducted to understand how policies and programs addressing sexual assault prevention and response affect and support active duty members and to understand progress over time and areas for improvement. This section summarizes the main themes heard across the Services. Themes are only presented if there was support across all DoD Services. Supporting comments do not include every comment made on a particular theme; rather, they illustrate the theme in the words of the participants. Additional information on these themes is included in the full report.

Current Focus on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

The *2015 FGSAPR* asked participants about the focus within their Service on SAPR-related issues. Overall, participants were aware of the definition of sexual assault and noted increased emphasis on SAPR programs, resources, and messaging, particularly at the leadership level.

“I think the [focus on sexual assault has] definitely improved over the last couple of years. I’ve definitely seen changes. They take it very seriously. I think it’s a positive as far as the program has been going.” (O1–O3 Female)

Participants also indicated that military members are more aware of resources available to them for all unwanted gender-related behaviors, including the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, the Victims’ Advocate/Unit Victims’ Advocate (VA/UVA), and the Special Victims’ Counsel/Victims’ Legal Counsel program (SVC/VLC).

“Maybe a few years ago [someone would need to ask], ‘Hey, who do you go to if there’s an incident?’ Where now you can list off two or three different options. If you mention anything to those three sources, they will immediately contact you back and you become their top priority.” (E5–E6 Male)

Participants also felt that, overall, the treatment of survivors has improved. They noted the lack of resources available to survivors in past years and the change they’ve seen over time.

“When it first started, the victims did not get any support. I saw that first-hand. [Now] they have an advocate, they have a lawyer, [and] they have people that talk to them. They have a lot more support now. The program is amazing now.” (E5–E6 Female)

Reporting Sexual Assault in the Military

The Department provides military survivors reporting options to make a formal report of sexual assault: restricted and unrestricted. Restricted reporting permits access to medical treatment and counseling services, but does not trigger an official investigation or command notification of the assault. Unrestricted reporting includes access to medical treatment and counseling services, and it also triggers an investigation by a Military Criminal Investigation Organization (MCIO). Given the impact of sexual assault on readiness and the benefit of resources/counseling, the Department offers restricted reporting options in order to allow a survivor the ability to remain anonymous and gain access to resources without initiating an investigation. Participants were asked about current reporting procedures and how the Department can encourage more members to come forward.

Nearly all participants across the Services were aware of the two types of reporting options and knew who to go to for both types of reports. They indicated this information was typically provided at trainings and safety stand-downs, which occurred on a regular basis. In addition, many participants stated that flyers and posters across the installation also provided this information. Some participants, however, were unsure who could take a restricted report.

Participants were also asked what type of report a military member might make, if they experience a sexual assault. Participants had varied opinions on this. Some felt military members would be likely to make a restricted report as this provides confidentiality as well as the ability to potentially convert to an unrestricted report at a later date. Reasons most often cited for restricted reporting are the importance of confidentiality and to avoid embarrassment or unwanted attention from other members. Conversely, other participants felt military members might be likely to make an unrestricted report in order to better resolve the issue and hold the offender appropriately accountable.

“I’d said probably restricted. Because they’d get the same help medically that they would with an unrestricted, but then they’d also get the benefit of keeping it behind as many closed doors as possible.” (E5–E6 Male)

Some participants felt there might be additional factors which would influence a military member's decision as to whether to make an unrestricted report. These factors included the rank of the individual, with higher ranking members more likely to report unrestricted; if injuries were sustained; or if there was a need to transfer out of the unit. Some participants believed survivors might be more likely to report unrestricted now compared to prior years.

“I’ve seen a greater increase in unrestricted reporting in the past decade specifically...I think in part it has to do with the positive changes of attacking sexual assault, that we view it more as a team effort attacking an enemy as opposed to limited people.” (O1–O3 Male)

Some participants also raised concerns about reporting, citing fear of retribution or backlash as a result of making a report. This was often cited as a result of people “taking sides” once the unit became aware of the situation or as a result of “victim blaming” or beliefs that the survivor is lying.

“Within our culture, retaliation is a big fear, I think; and if it’s a person that is high up on the chain of command, a lot of people would be like ‘He wouldn’t do that’ and they won’t believe the person.” (E5–E6 Male)

Some participants indicated they felt comfortable contacting a SAPR-resource in the event of a sexual assault, most commonly a SARC or VA/UVA, and trusted them to handle the report

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properly. Of those participants who did not feel comfortable contacting a SAPR-resource, they most often indicated they would discuss the issue with a chaplain or a friend/family member.

By and large, participants were understood how to respond in the event a military member disclosed an assault to them, including how to protect their right to make a restricted report.

“I was taught if you think they're going to say something incriminating or something related to SARC or whatever, just interrupt them and say, ‘Hey, before you tell me, if you want to call the SARC office, do we need to do anything before that. Because if this is related to any of this stuff, I have to report it’. You can still help them and get them to the right avenues as their supervisor and stuff without forcing them into a mandatory reporting situation.” (O1–O3 Female)

When asked for suggestions to encourage reporting, participants often indicated that some survivors will never report, no matter how many resources are put into place. Others felt improvements could be made by increasing the trust and confidence of members regarding the reporting system. Suggestions included ensuring confidentiality to the extent possible and providing better education on how collateral misconduct is handled (i.e., if the survivor was violating a set policy during the assault). In addition, some members felt that publicizing criminal actions against convicted offenders would assist in providing assurances to survivors that action will be taken.

“If we actually started hearing about consequences that happened for reporting, so the person got help and the perpetrator was actually punished with something, we would have more confidence in actually wanting to report.” (E1–E4 Female)

Retaliatory Behaviors

The Department prohibits retaliation of any kind as a result of making a criminal report, including of sexual assault, and is interested in understanding more about the types of professional reprisal and social retaliation (i.e., ostracism/maltreatment) survivors and members experience and whether active duty members believe that leadership takes this issue seriously. In addition, focus group participants were asked about the role of social media in these situations.

By and large, participants were aware that retaliatory behaviors, whether professional reprisal or ostracism/maltreatment, were prohibited by policy, though fewer had a recollection of specific training or education on who to go to report such behaviors.

Some participants report seeing retaliatory behaviors first-hand or could easily imagine it occurring within the force.

“I believe it happens, absolutely; especially if the accused is somebody a lot of people like. And, people absolutely are going to say things.” (E7–E9 Female)

If these behaviors were to occur, most participants felt retribution from peers, such as ostracism, would be more common. These participants also raised concerns that often these behaviors are not with the intent to “retaliate,” rather based on uncertainty as to how to treat the survivor.

“It's not because they report it; I think it's because we do not know what to say. It's more awkward for us because we do not want to talk about it, but at the same time we can tell that you're not feeling right.” (E5–E6 Male)

Some participants could see, or had seen, professional reprisal occur as well, though these behaviors may not always be overt and may be more subtle in nature.

“I've seen reprisal take the form of the negative performance evaluation and it definitely effectively ended that individual's career.” (O4–O5 Female)

Conversely, some participants could not imagine these types of behaviors occurring, particularly from anyone in a leadership position, nor had they ever seen survivors treated in a negative way as a result of reporting a sexual assault.

“I've never personally seen [retaliation].” (O4–O5 Female)

When asked for suggestions as to how to mitigate and/or address these behaviors, some participants felt there was not much the Department could do other than continue to train and educate members on what is expected in policy.

“Keep pushing that it's not allowed, the same way we push sexual assault, sexual harassment—it's not allowed; and neither is retaliation.” (O1–O3 Male)

Others felt that leadership and members themselves should take a more active role in identifying these types of behaviors, standing up against them, and encouraging better behavior.

“I think it should start with each and every one of us. If you see it or hear it you can stop it right there.” (O1–O3 Female)

Finally, members did indicate social media may be a chosen venue for engaging in these types of behaviors, particularly as the Department is taking stronger action against retaliatory behaviors and social media provides a semblance of anonymity.

“Bullying happens online all the time. I'm sure even more so with victims of sexual assault and other things too. People are rude on the internet because you're anonymous.” (E5–E6 Male)

Unwanted Gender-Related Behaviors

The Department is interested in understanding the scope and extent of all unwanted gender-related behaviors, as often there is a continuum of behaviors within a given environment. Unwanted gender-related behaviors may include sexual harassment or sexism as well as gender-based discrimination. The Department is committed to reducing the prevalence of these behaviors by providing reporting avenues, training on these topics, and facilitating an environment of dignity and respect. Another area of investigation in the *2015 FGSAPR* centered on the perceptions of leadership with respect to their active engagement in preventing these types of unwanted behaviors. Questions were also asked about members' use of social media in these unwanted behaviors.

Overall, most participants were familiar with the definitions of sexual harassment and aware these types of behaviors were prohibited by policy. However, some expressed confusion over the distinction between harassment and assault and when it is a SAPR issue versus an Equal Opportunity (EO) issue. Some of these participants raised concerns that they weren't certain if the alleged offender of these behaviors was aware what they were doing was sexual harassment.

"[Sexual harassment] is harder to define [and] it's harder to know where that line is. It's hard to know when that one person in the corner is uncomfortable or when you've crossed the line. Maybe you feel like you didn't cross the line, but somebody else did?" (O1–O3 Female)

Some participants felt that sexual harassment does occur and had witnessed specific events while in the force.

"As a medic, I do not know how many times I have been harassed in the exam room [by] the male patients." (E7–E9 Female)

By and large participants felt that if leadership was aware of sexual harassment occurring or witnessed these events, they would take action. Further, participants indicated that often the person who was called out would more than likely change their behavior as a result, though this accountability might depend on the individual.

"Someone made an obscene joke [during check-in] and the Chief actually pulled that person aside to talk about it. The Chief made sure they knew that it wasn't going to be tolerated." (E5–E6 Male)

Participants often felt this engagement was progress from previous years.

“In the past, [there were] pinup girls on the airplanes and certain magazines in the restrooms and posters on walls. That stuff [is removed and] it doesn't have a place in today's military.” (O1–O3 Male)

Some participants felt some individuals in leadership would not always take this initiative or will only take action if someone complains. Others felt it might depend on the rank of the leader with command-level leadership more likely to step in and say or do something, while others further down the chain of command may be less likely to respond or intervene.

“It depends on who [the] leadership [is]. There's some who are going to be not as respectful. Most of them are.” (E3–E4 Female)

Other participants noted changes in the military culture and felt these behaviors do not occur as frequently as in the past.

“There's a pretty strong cultural understanding that it's not acceptable. There's not as much joking around the water cooler like there used to be. And, dirty jokes are very rare.” (O1–O3 Male)

Participants reiterated that there may be a difference in rank structure with the higher level leaders and commanders responding more sternly than lower level leadership.

“Officers—they're a lot more politically correct or a lot more professional. They speak differently...The junior Officers, the brand new Chiefs, or [members] that are a little bit older, crustier—they want to joke around and be a part of the team. They want their junior [members] to like them. It's not always in their best [interest] for their positions.” (E5–E6 Female)

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For reporting these behaviors, participants were less certain than with sexual assault. Often they cited the SARC, VA, or chain of command. Some participants knew to go to the Equal Opportunity Office to make a complaint. While most participants said they knew the definition and had been trained on sexual harassment in general, some participants expressed confusion as to what exactly constitutes sexual harassment.

“Sexual assault [reporting] gets so much focus—who you go to, restricted or unrestricted, [etc.] If you asked a [member about reporting sexual harassment], unless they really, really paid attention to the training, then they're not going to be able to tell. I'm not even a hundred percent sure on how to report sexual harassment.” (O1–O3 Female)

Sexist behaviors were also mentioned by participants as occurring within the force, often more prevalent in fields where women are less common.

“Females shouldn't be in the infantry.’ Or, ‘Females shouldn't be working on aircraft—females should be doing office jobs.’ [Some] haven't become accustomed to females being able to work on aircraft, being grunts, doing all the things that we can do. They haven't gotten accustomed to that equal opportunity lifestyle.” (E1–E4 Male)

Many participants said that when leadership hears or witnesses these types of behaviors, they are typically quick to intervene.

“Once they find out, they're on it fast.” (E5–E6 Male)

However, this may depend on the culture within the unit or on individual leaders.

“I think it also depends on the career field and what the cultural mentality of that career field and whether they would address it appropriately.” (E5–E6 Female)

When asked for suggestions on how to address or mitigate issues of unwanted behaviors, some participants felt the Department would need to address the culture the member is coming in from.

“It comes from the people's background. I've seen some people who have been sheltered, they've come in and they do not know that may be acceptable where you are from, [but], it's not here. You either need to change; or, you are going to find yourself going out the door.” (O1–O3 Male)

For this reason, some participants felt ongoing training and education was important as well as leadership engagement and visibility in addressing the issue. In addition, participants felt individual military members needed to become more comfortable advocating for themselves and standing up for others.

“I learned [you] make it clear the first time [and the second time that you will not] tolerate it. Start drawing that line clearer, people will respect it. If you joke with them once or twice, they're going to think it's okay all the time. You just have to make it clear what it is you will and will not tolerate.” (E5–E6 Female)

Similar to sexual assault, some participants felt there may be repercussions against someone who makes a report of sexual harassment, sexist behaviors, or gender discrimination. This may be aligned with reprisal and ostracism/maltreatment, or more victim blaming rhetoric.

“He's a Sergeant; and, at the end of the day, [he's] in charge of your promotion. They decide a lot of your life, so a lot of people do not want to speak up.” (E1–E4 Female)

Similar to feedback received around sexual assault, participants reviewed the role of social media with unwanted gender-related behaviors and discussed how anonymity may allow for more inappropriate behaviors compared to what someone might do in-person. There was some confusion by participants as to what the official Departmental policy is around social media use.

Overall, many participants felt there have been improvements in the focus on addressing these unwanted gender-related behaviors compared to past years.

“I came here in '98 and there were certain magazines kept in the men's room. I mean, it was just a thing, it wasn't to be cool, it was just a thing that happened. You would never see that now; it's a completely different world.” (O4–O5 Male)

Changes in SAPR Policy

The DoD recognizes the legal process following a sexual assault report can be difficult for any survivor to navigate and has implemented policies and support in recent years to assist survivors in the military. The DoD was interested in participants' awareness of these policies/support and whether participants believe these policies/support were considered useful resources for survivors and useful tools for commanders.

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Overall, participants were familiar with most SAPR-related resources including the SARC and VA/UVA. However, participants were less certain about the SVC/VLC program with some indicating they had not ever heard of this resource.

“It’s the first time I’ve heard of it.” (E7–E9 Male)

Across all participants, most felt that the SVC/VLC program would be beneficial to a survivor or to them in the event they experienced an assault.

“If I were a victim, I would definitely be reaching out for information, to find out what my options are [and] for guidance. I would definitely come across that resource and I would use it.” (E3–E4 Male)

Participants were also varied in their understanding of the expedited transfer process with some participants aware of this resource while others had not heard of this option. While some participants had first-hand examples of how this resource benefited a survivor, others expressed concern that it might cause more problems for them in the end and felt the option to transfer the accused might be a better option in some circumstances.

“The victim can get to stay within the squadron, so they’re not the ones being punished, having to move to get away from the perpetrator. If the perpetrator is moved by the commander, even to work somewhere else, maybe [even] on base, at least the victim is not having to work next to [the accused].” (O1–O3 Female)

Prevention

There are instances where individuals have the opportunity to observe unwanted gender-related behaviors and/or potential perceived red flags and intervene to prevent a potential sexual assault. The Department was interested in understanding what participants might do when they witness certain perceived questionable behaviors in a workplace or in social situations. Participants were also asked to indicate at what point, if any, they would step in and address the issue if they witnessed or heard perceived inappropriate behaviors (i.e., unwanted gender-related behaviors).

Overall, participants were knowledgeable about various red flags for sexual assault including alcohol use by the offender to disinhibit a potential victim or offender tactics such as attempts to isolate a potential victim. However, participants felt that sometimes there is a gray area where it is difficult to tell whether behaviors or actions are unwanted.

“I think part of it depends on the perception of whether or not it's wanted or unwanted because...sometimes it's kind of hard to tell whether or not, you know, maybe that person is a potential victim. In a lot of cases, [people] will feel social pressure to not do things that make it look like they're rejecting the person that's coming onto them. It's tough to say.” (E5–E6 Male)

Overall, participants felt that many times members would intervene and have been encouraged to do so by leadership. In addition, they cited trainings as beneficial in teaching the tools to intervene.

“Our brigade commander made a big deal out of it because there was a [member] who stepped in at a bar and he took the female from the situation and told this guy, ‘I know what you are doing, it's not okay.’ I think they actually got in a bar fight over it. Because he did the right thing, the brigade commander didn't punish him. That was put out to all of the battalions and all of the companies down to the lowest level as an example.” (O1–O3 Female)

However, often participants felt this may depend on the rank of the individual, as lower ranking members may not feel as comfortable intervening particularly if it was a higher ranking member involved. Conversely, if it were a lower ranking individual who is involved, or a friend, they may be more likely to intervene.

Overall, participants felt that members are more likely to intervene now than previous years particularly due to the increased emphasis on member's accountability across the ranks.

“Yes. I think people are more willing to step in now than they were before this program existed.” (O1–O3 Female)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Department strives to provide a safe, healthy, and productive working environment for all its personnel. Working with the Services and the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), the DoD has implemented policies and programs to prevent and reduce sexual assault, to provide reporting options and establish survivor care procedures. Recurring evaluations of these programs are helpful to measure prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault, improve programs and policies aimed at reducing instances of sexual harassment and sexual assault, and improve survivor care.

One source of information for assessing these programs and evaluating the gender relations environment within the DoD involves qualitative feedback from active duty members through focus groups with a skilled moderator who is trained to facilitate discussion on these topics. This report offers findings from the *2015 Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Among Active Duty Members (2015 FGSAPR)*. This introductory chapter provides background on why this study was conducted, a description of the focus group methodology, analysis methods, limitations, and a brief overview of subsequent chapters.

Section 577 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2005 required the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive policy to assess the DoD's response to sexual assaults involving members of the Armed Forces. Subsequent policy established SAPRO and provided the Secretary of Defense a reoccurring evaluation of the services and resources provided to military members who have reported sexual assault to DoD authorities. This report provides the findings from the first study in an annual assessment cycle of focus groups and surveys, alternating each year after 2015 and providing qualitative and quantitative data to the Secretary of Defense and Service policymakers. This alternating cycle resembles the assessment cycle employed at the DoD Military Service Academies (MSAs) pursuant to U.S. Code 10 as amended by Section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for the Fiscal Year 2007.

Focus Group Methodology

The Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC) within DMDC follows standard, scientific methods that are widely used in the survey industry for data collections across a variety of domains. Focus group methodology employs these standards for qualitative research to collect subjective information from participants on a limited number of topics. The methods are similar to those that have been successfully used by DMDC for a number of years to conduct Congressionally-directed focus groups related to sexual assault issues at the three DoD MSAs (DMDC, 2013a). The methodology for the *2015 FGSAPR* was consistent across locations. Although the results cannot be generalized to the full military population, they provide general observations, insights into issues and suggestions from respondents for further consideration.

Selection of Participants

Participation in the *2015 FGSAPR* was voluntary. Participants were selected at each installation, within clusters defined by gender and paygrade, and offered the opportunity to participate.

Rosters of Service members were randomized by DMDC according to these clusters and returned to each respective installation. It was the responsibility of the point of contact (POC) at the installation to use this roster to identify the first 15 Service members who were available (e.g., did not have a prior commitment, medical appointment, or scheduled leave during the scheduled focus group) to attend the focus group appropriate for their gender and paygrade group. Additional Service members were selected from the randomized lists as necessary to achieve 10 to 12 committed members for each scheduled group. In some cases, Service members who agreed to participate were not able to attend at their scheduled session. For that reason, session sizes varied. For mixed-gender focus groups at operational installations, similar procedures were used, but the rosters were not separated by gender. Hence, men and women were selected in the order they appeared on the randomized combined list for each installation.

Table 1.
Number of Participants by Service

Service	Number of Participants
Air Force	101
Army	87
Marine Corps	158
Navy	113
Total	459

Randomly selected members received notification of their initial selection for the focus groups from their POC. The notification informed them that they had been selected to participate in a Secretary of Defense-directed focus group addressing issues of unwanted gender-related behaviors and sexual assault prevention and response as part of the effort to understand issues and provide constructive feedback to senior DoD leadership and policy makers. The notification made it clear that the study was a non-attributable, voluntary data collection where they would be asked to share their perspectives on questions related to sexual assault prevention and response, with a focus on conduct, training, and policies. The members were told that the sessions would not ask questions about any personal experiences of sexual assault.

Development of Questions

To begin the collaborative effort of developing focus group questions, analysts drafted potential questions in concert with the development of the *2015 Military Investigation and Justice Survey (2015 MIJES)* and the *2015 Survivor Experience Survey (2015 SES)* conducted by DMDC, and by reviewing findings from the *2014 Military Workplace Study (RMWS)* conducted by RAND Corporation and comments and findings from the *2012 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey of Active Duty Members (2012 WGRA)* conducted by DMDC. Specifically, analysts looked for follow-up topics which might clarify or expand upon findings from the surveys. Based on

feedback from DoD Stakeholders, eight topic areas¹ were identified. The focus group protocols and handouts are included in the Appendices. The eight topic areas addressed during each focus group were:

1. Focus on Sexual Assault—Discussion on the general attitude among members on the focus on sexual assault by Service and installation leadership, perceptions regarding the importance of the issue and whether or not it is taken seriously by all members and throughout chain of command, the amount of emphasis it receives, familiarity with the broad definition of sexual assault, and noticeable changes (both positive and negative) in the way the DoD has dealt with the issue of sexual assault over the past few years/over their careers.
2. Reporting—Understanding of the two official options for making a formal report of sexual assault (restricted and unrestricted), awareness of and trust in Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)/Victims' Advocate (VA), potential reasons for the increase in the number of formal reports made to the installation/Service and what more can be done to encourage reporting.
3. Retaliation—Comprehension of types of perceived retaliation, whether professional retaliation (i.e., reprisal) or social retaliation (i.e., ostracism/maltreatment) has been observed as a result of reporting sexual assault, who would be likely to retaliate (e.g., peers or leadership), as well as the use and role of social media for and in social retaliation.
4. Sexual Harassment/Sexist Behavior—Understanding of/familiarity with the definition of sexual harassment, messages regarding sexual harassment and sexist behavior from unit and Service leadership, how well unit and Service leadership lead by example, the perceived relationship between unwanted gender-related behaviors (i.e., sexist behaviors and sexual harassment) and sexual assault, individuals that exhibit these behaviors, the use of social media, and noticeable changes (both positive and negative) in DoD's emphasis in improving culture.
5. Changes in SAPR Policy—Awareness of specialized attorney positions (Special Victims' Counsel [SVC]/Victims' Legal Counsel [VLC]) and expedited transfers.
6. Prevention—Discussion of what members consider potential "red flags" for actions or behaviors that could lead to a potential sexual assault, whether members would intervene in a *social* situation when they saw these potential "red flags," and whether members would intervene in a *workplace* situation when they witnessed inappropriate workplace behaviors.
7. Training—Conversation around training received on issues of sexual assault, types and frequency of recurring trainings, examples of most effective and least effective

¹ While included in the protocol as shown in Appendix A, the topic, Taking Gender-Relations Surveys, is not included in this report. The data collected from the discussion will be considered internally for use by DMDC for future gender-relations surveys.

training, understanding of leadership’s guidance for members on how to interact with alleged offender and survivor, and insights for improving future SAPR trainings.

8. General Observations and Suggestions for Addressing Sexual Assault Prevention and Response—Awareness of what more the DoD can do to help prevent sexual assault, what members wish they had known about dealing with sexual assault when first joining the military, and perceptions around whether the military is better or worse than civilian organizations in dealing with sexual assault.

Conducting the Focus Groups

Each Service selected two installations for focus group administration. Participant selection was conducted using a random sampling process coordinated by DMDC to ensure impartial participant presence. The chosen installations are unique in terms of their geographic location as well as the Service occupations/missions residing there and the members that serve those missions. These characteristics allow for potential differences in Service members’ perspectives and views on unwanted gender-relations behaviors and SAPR. The SAPRO representative for each Service selected the two installations that were visited for the 58 focus group sessions conducted as part of this effort. The focus groups were designed to obtain responses from active duty members in various paygrades across the Continental United States (CONUS) between 21 September and 16 October 2015. Table 2 displays the Service selected installations.

Table 2.
2015 FGSAPR: Locations and Sessions

Installations by Service	Sessions Conducted
Army: Fort Drum (NY), Joint Base-Lewis McChord (WA)	• Junior Enlisted (E1–E4) ² : Two sessions (1 male, 1 female)
Navy: Naval Base Kitsap (WA), Naval Base San Diego (CA)	• Mid Enlisted (E5–E6): Two sessions (1 male, 1 female)
Marine Corps: Air Station Miramar, Camp Pendleton (CA)	• Senior Enlisted (E7–E9): One session (mixed gender)
Air Force: Eglin Air Force Base (FL) Whiteman Air Force Base (MO)	• Junior Officer (O1–O3): Two sessions (1 male, 1 female)
	• Senior Officer (O4–O5): One session (mixed gender)

Each focus group session was scheduled for 90 minutes. All focus group sessions were governed by a number of ground rules, most notably that they were non-attribution, voluntary sessions. DMDC provided a trained facilitator, assistant trained facilitator, and professional court reporter for each session. DMDC moderated focus groups with trained focus group facilitators leading dual-moderated sessions. Facilitators followed a structured interview protocol to ensure consistency of questions across Services, topics were covered in an adequate amount of time, and

² Paygrade designations represent enlisted (E) and officer (O) in paygrades that range E1–E9 for enlisted members and O1–O10 for officers.

conversations were appropriately contained. DMDC also provided a female court reporter who used a stenographic machine to transcribe all comments from participants and the facilitator(s). The court reporter took verbatim transcription, which was provided to DMDC to review, and redacted any information that could reveal a respondent's identity. No audio or video recording was made of any focus group session to assure participants' anonymity.

Installation staff members, such as SARCs or VAs, were excluded from the room during the focus group session, although they were available if a participant experienced distress during a session or wanted to follow up on a matter after the session. As noted, audio and video recordings were not conducted, and there were no individually identifiable records. Due to these procedures, no link between an individual respondent and their responses was possible. Only selected comments that have had identifiers removed have been included in the final report to illustrate findings, but maintain the anonymity of participants.

Participants were encouraged to provide information generally but not to discuss personal experiences, names, or other identifying details. They were also advised not to share information discussed within the focus groups after the session concluded.

Analysis Methodology

Data from the focus groups were analyzed qualitatively for major themes and ideas conveyed across the sessions. Themes are only presented if there was support across all DoD Services, in order to protect both the Services and the DoD from generalizing location specific or minimally substantiated themes. The order of presentation does not imply that any one theme is more important than any other. For each theme, supporting comments from focus group participants are included. The supporting comments do not include every comment made on a particular theme; rather, they illustrate the theme in the words of the participants. Affirmative responses in groups may take the form of active "yeses" or "nos" or in the form of head nods (e.g., an affirmative nonverbal response). These are included throughout the report when they occur to indicate agreement or disagreement. In addition, no attempt was made to quantify the number of comments made on a specific theme. While this approach does not provide quantitative, scientific estimates, the *2015 FGSAPR* serves as a post-survey data collection effort that compliments the *Workplace and Gender Relations Surveys (WGRs)* by providing additional context and detail to survey findings. The *WGRs* are conducted by DMDC for DoD and provide scientifically constructed estimates of gender-related experiences and opinions (DMDC, 2013b).

The results in this study are based on qualitative analysis—findings cannot be generalized to all military members. Findings should be viewed as illustrations of situations and themes for consideration by DoD officials as they review their programs. Findings may also be viewed as a general perspective on participants' views of sexual harassment and sexual assault at their base/installation, but they do not portray a statistical report on estimated prevalence rates or quantitative evaluation of prevention and response programs.

Categorization of Topics

DMDC analyzed over 80 hours of transcripts from 58 focus groups to identify major themes.³ To analyze and categorize topics, the qualitative data analysis software package produced by QSR International, NVivo—a grouping and validation tool which provides comprehensive coverage of topics for summaries of findings—was used.⁴ NVivo was used to code language in the transcripts into thematic nodes. Each thematic node represented a pre-determined question or topic discussed in the protocol. After initial coding, a second analyst coded the transcripts to ensure all coding was reliable. Once all the language from the transcripts was coded into nodes, individual nodes were exported into separate documents. These nodes were then filtered further to identify and quickly capture the details within each thematic topic. Once specific topics were culled, representative quotations were pulled and added to the report to validate the theme. Where focus groups differed in their opinions on a topic, both perspectives are presented in separate findings.

Organization of Findings

Findings are presented in separate chapters for the eight major topic areas and a summary chapter. Within chapters, the major themes are presented with specific findings and supporting comments from the participants. Each comment identifies the gender and paygrade of the military member. Caution must be exercised in reviewing these findings and comments should not be viewed as representative of all participants.

³ Each focus group was approximately 90 minutes in length including introductory, privacy, and informed consent information. This introductory text was not transcribed.

⁴ NVivo by QSR International Pty Ltd., Version 10, 2012.

Chapter 2: Focus on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

The 2015 FGSAPR investigated topics designed to gather the perceptions and insights of active duty members on sexual assault prevention and response (SAPR). Participants were first asked their perceptions regarding sexual assault in the military. The facilitator inquired if the focus on SAPR issues has changed over members' time in service. Lastly, the facilitator probed to understand members' knowledge of the definition of sexual assault⁵ in order to ensure proper context for the subsequent conversation.

Perceptions on the Focus on Sexual Assault and SAPR

- **Most participants indicated there is concerted focus on sexual assault issues in the military. It is an important issue, taken seriously among peers/the unit, and is perceived to receive significant emphasis.**
 - *“I think it’s taken very seriously by the chain of command. There’s no impetus for anyone to ignore [it].”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“It is taken very seriously.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“The majority of people do take it seriously.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“[The focus on sexual assault], it is taken seriously.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“[Sexual assault is] not acceptable. Just flat out not acceptable.”* (O4–O5 Male)
- **Participants also indicated the topic of sexual assault is taken seriously by command/leadership.**
 - *“Seeing the general coming out and showing that [he’s] doing all of the briefings, he’s really taken a point to let everybody under him know that I want this seriously, so everybody underneath him should be taking it to the same amount of level.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“I think it’s taken very seriously by the chain of command, regardless of anecdotal evidence that sometimes ‘Nobody cares, nobody listens.’ There’s no impetus for anyone to ignore that sort of thing.”* (O4–O5 Male)

⁵ The following broad definition of sexual assault was noted to participants: sexual assault is a range of behaviors from unwanted sexual touching (e.g., touching areas like genitalia and buttocks) through completed sexual assault (e.g., rape and sodomy) where threats or force are used to commit without consent these acts or where the victim is incapacitated or unable to consent. This definition was created under the guidance of DoD legal counsel and experts in the field to help participants better relate their experience(s) to the types of sexual assault behaviors addressed by military law (i.e., Articles 120 and 125 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice [UCMJ]) and the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program.

- *“I believe this installation and command take it very seriously. There are a lot of handouts, brochures, information, and multitudes of general use of that.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- *“I would definitely say so. Whenever sexual harassment is brought up, or assault or anything like that, it gets the full attention of command. And those individuals get help as needed, and it definitely gets full attention.” (E7–E9 Male)*
- *“There was a department where somebody had got into some incident with a Chief and it was sent like straight up to the Command Master Chief (CMC) right away, so it got handled. That department took it very serious.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“If it's a sexual assault, the command, they are constantly making sure that it's the right process and it's being taken care of and what more can they do. So it's definitely a high focus on everyone's radar.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“I think a lot of our chain of command, the people who are in leadership take it really seriously because they want us to be comfortable in our work environment.” (E3–E4 Female)*
- **Other participants indicated there has been more emphasis on SAPR now than in the past.**
 - *“If somebody does something, it is taken very seriously now.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I think it's definitely taken seriously. I've been seeing a lot more cases or hearing about a lot more cases than I've noticed before, and I've been in for five years.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“I think the [focus on sexual assault has] definitely improved over the last couple of years. I've definitely seen changes. They take it very seriously. I think it's a positive as far as the program has been going.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“They emphasize it a lot. It's not like an annual type thing, it's becoming more of a culture I guess.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“It's become a big deal, and to most commanders zero tolerance. Yeah, it's gotten a lot bigger the last couple of years.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- **Other participants indicated they believed the culture (i.e., the installation or Service) has a low tolerance for sexual assault.**
 - *“No tolerance. It's not acceptable. You have to be respectful. Even a joke is going to be a no–no in the workplace area.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“[Before] it was about treating the victim [and] wasn't about treating the problem or going after the problem and investigating and putting a stop to it. Now it's, 'Let's stop it before it happens.'” (O4–O5 Male)*

- *“I have seen more people intervene at an earlier level where maybe the language is starting to border on sexual harassment. I do see people intervening to cut out that explicit language and those harassing jokes.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- *“It starts at the work center with the professional workspace. If you do not have a climate in the command that tolerates the lower level misbehavior or sexual innuendo and all of that, I think the leadership understands that's a gateway into the heavier things that can happen. I think a lot of leaders recognize that now and they do not just tolerate the little things that they would have looked the other way on in the past.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- *“We look out for each other like brothers and sisters because that was the mentality. This is our job and we are going to take care of each other. This is how you treat these people because I want to be treated the same way.” (E7–E9 Male)*

Progress Made on SAPR-Related Issues

- **Some participants indicated there has been positive progress made by the increase in accessibility of SAPR resources (i.e., Sexual Assault Response Coordinator [SARC]/Victims' Advocate [VA], and Special Victims' Counsel [SVC]/Victims' Legal Counsel [VLC]).**
 - *“It's advertised a lot more. It's not as reactive as it used to be in the past. Now it's a lot more proactive. Everyone knows who the Victims' Advocates are, we know [they receive] training, so they're going to be well educated on the program.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“If you are a victim, they have the UVA; [and], they have a cell phone on them at all times. There are so many hotlines that you could call if you've been sexually assaulted. There are a lot of gateways for you to go to.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“You have SAPR office, you have the Chaplain's office, and you have Military OneSource; and, I know there's more. Maybe a few years ago [someone would need to ask], ‘Hey, who do you go to if there's an incident?’ Where now you can list off two or three different options. If you mention anything to those three sources, they will immediately contact you back and you become their top priority.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I do not believe it got the attention that it does now. I was a Victims' Advocate for two years, so I kind of got to see the ins and outs of what really does happen nowadays. They certainly run the gamut nowadays. It's [a] very robust program here; and, probably in most places very robust. I would say without a doubt there's more attention to the cases going on today than I had seen in 2007.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I would say definitely [an] improvement. I know that there are now victims' lawyers—a marked improvement—which didn't exist two years ago or even a year ago.” (O4–O5 Female)*

- **Other participants indicated progress had been made in the treatment of survivors.**
 - *“When it first started, the victims did not get any support. I saw that first-hand. [Now] they have an advocate, they have a lawyer, [and] they have people that talk to them. They have a lot more support now. The program is amazing now.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think now the attitude of the [Service], whether it's based off of training or whatnot, there is a more of a ‘Let's take care of our victim and not judge them and not jump to any conclusion about them, but get them on the right path and take care of that.’ I think it's a major positive change that's come out of this as far as where it was and where it is now.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“They're more sensitive to it. When there is a case that comes up, make sure that you're taking into consideration the victim, what the victim wants to do, and especially compared to say five, six years ago, where it was swept under the rug a lot of times or it was—became more of the victim's fault rather than truly investigating the whole process.” (E7–E9 Female)*
 - *“The biggest change is the focus on protecting the victim. I think [it] is probably the most important change in terms of changing the overall culture of the [Service] and getting victims to be comfortable in reporting because they know they're going to be taken care of.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- **Other participants indicated progress has been made in the handling of other SAPR-related issues (i.e., separation of genders, members' willingness to come forward, more bystander awareness).**
 - *“Sexual assault used to be a big thing at [the] Transient Personnel Unit (TPU), but it's not so much anymore because we've taken steps to eliminate it by putting females in different areas of the building than males. They live in different wings [and on] different floors. We do not allow them to hang out in each other's rooms. We have a rover that walks around. The issue has gone away [and there hasn't been] a sexual assault issue in two and a half years.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I've worked with women at the battalion level. There's sexual assault happening no matter if the battalion is integrated or not. I think what's changed with women in combat arms [is that] having a woman there to facilitate the dialogue and work with that victim or provide that perspective, I think that unto itself has increased the effectiveness of the program prevention. It's like a paradigm shift. It's changed for the better.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“Go back seven years—or, your entire career—and report what happened. Obviously reports went up because people took a deeper look and said, ‘You know, giving somebody a good game pat is inappropriate touching. So if you didn't appreciate it, then you should report it. And so I think when they opened that window, then they came back and got a lot of feedback.” (E7–E9 Male)*

- *“I do feel as though they're coming forward more randomly. Not like before [before] it was swept up under the table [then] because you were singled out if you said something. ‘Why are you saying anything; you know he's a senior?’ I've seen [members] finally come forward and talk among themselves and feel more comfortable.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“During the command climate survey, [a member] explained that a specific NCO, was demonstrating stretching the proper way and a young [member responded, saying], ‘Sarge, I do not like that.’ [And], it never happened again. Whereas ten years ago, that [member] wasn't taken seriously, nothing happened; [and], that [member] was labeled a troublemaker and then never got the help that they needed.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“When I first joined, from a female’s perspective, they tucked it down deep inside and let it go. You didn't talk about this stuff and you did whatever you could to hang with the boys and then it was fine. Now I'm seeing females, or even the males for that matter, coming forward. [E.g.], [there was male member] who had pictures were taken of him [on a] drunken night; [and], he came forward and said something. The SAPRs, [then], took it all to legal [and Military Criminal Investigative Office (MCIO)]. The two [members] that assaulted him did some jail time [and] were kicked out of the [Service].” (E7–E9 Female)*

Understanding of Sexual Assault Definition

- **Most participants indicated they are familiar with the broad definition of sexual assault and it is the one used in their trainings.**
 - *“The definition that you used is the one that's been broadcast throughout the classes, throughout the training. That's why everyone is nodding their head, because literally that is what the instructors say.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“My UVAs use that definition because it's from the canned brief that they're required to give.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“Yes, ma'am.” (E3–E4 Male)*
 - *“The training that we have to do, it's directed by exactly how we're supposed to define sexual assault. [And], when the SARCs do the training, it's also defined. Yes, that definition is [in our training].” (E7–E9 Female)*

Knowledge about the SARC or Victims' Advocate for the Unit or Installation

- **Some participants indicated they knew their SARC and Victims' Advocate, and also how to contact them.**

- *“We quiz on it. We quiz all of our juniors—especially when we go to board promotions and stuff like that. They always ask us what it is. Or, some random person will come and [ask], ‘Who’s your SHARP advocate?’ ‘Or, who’s your SARC?’ [If they do not know, we’ll] pop out the answer.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- *“We know our unit SARC.”* (E5–E6 Male)
- *“They know or should know.”* (O4–O5 Male)
- **Conversely, some participants indicated they were not sure they knew who the SARC or Victims’ Advocate was, or how to contact them.**
 - *“I’m not sure if they made an appearance. I thought we talked to a SARC rep, but I do not know if it’s the same person.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“I can tell them all day long that ‘Petty Officer so and so is your SAPR representative. They’re not going to remember that, especially in a time of crisis.”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“I couldn’t tell you names.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“Victims’ Advocate contact information? The SARC stuff is everywhere. I agree with that. But, I have no idea how to get ahold of [the VA]. I’m sure I could figure it out, but that information is not really as available as the SARC stuff.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- **Some participants indicated they are more familiar with the UVA/VA because their information is more readily available.**
 - *“I do not think I know who our brigade SARC is. I know where their office is. But I do not think I know who it is in the brigade. I know they’ve had the same position for a couple of years.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“They post it. In any common walkway, you’ll see a poster with the face of the UVA and the UVA’s assistant as well.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“For our squadron, and probably all other squadrons, there’s a VA printout of both the male and female representatives, and they’re literally everywhere.”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“There’s a lot more Victims’ Advocates out there and they normally are the points of contact (POCs) for training. I know the people individually in my unit that are the Victims’ Advocates.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“Each unit has several Victims’ Advocates, so there are 30 on this base.”* (E7–E9 Male)

- **Some participants indicated SARCs and VAs are highlighted in training, and therefore members can find information about them easily.**
 - “They're usually highlighted or introduced in all of the training, whether they're giving the training or not. [E.g.], ‘Sergeant X is your company [SAPR] rep’ or ‘Sergeant Y is the battalion Victims’ Advocate.’” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “During quarterly training, they announce who those individuals are [and] let them know the location of where they are [and] the numbers where they can find them out.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “It's put out in training but when you're only training just a couple of times a year, that's easy to forget sometimes. I know that there's been an increase in having the information available, whether it's posters or cards and things like that, so I know that there's effort being made.” (O4–O5 Female)
 - “When you first get to a base you would take to the first term [member's] course, and the SARC people go and brief there. And then when you go to the Leadership School, you get briefed again. And they're at every single briefing or a Victims’ Advocate is represented at every briefing that is done for SARC or SAPR.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “Commander’s Call. I've seen it in training too. It's one of the things they always talk about. ‘So if something happens, so these are the two different reporting styles, here's who you can go talk to.’” (O1–O3 Male)
- **Some participants indicated their command also provides information about SAPR resources (i.e., SARC, UVA/VA).**
 - “Once a month, our SARC at the brigade level or our SHARP [representative] at the battalion level—for five minutes—discuss whatever [a SHARP-related] topic is and then we break away. It's been a good opportunity for us because we're spread out.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “It's in our command's Plan of the Day (POD).” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “Our CO puts it out every Commander's Call; [i.e.], who's the ombudsman [is], who are our Victims’ Advocates.” (O4–O5 Female)

Chapter 3: Reporting

The DoD offers military survivors two options for making a formal report of sexual assault: restricted⁶ and unrestricted.⁷ Survivors may initially make a restricted report, but may later choose to convert this report to an unrestricted report in order to initiate an investigation. Conversely, once a respondent makes an unrestricted report, he/she cannot convert to a restricted report. Understanding the impact of sexual assault on mission readiness and the benefit to survivors of resources/counseling, the DoD offers restricted reporting options in order to allow a survivor the ability to maintain confidentiality while still initiating a report and gaining access to resources. This chapter investigates members' awareness of the two types of reporting options for sexual assault, how they became aware of these options, and perceptions regarding the likelihood of a survivor to report. Additionally, the chapter reveals members' awareness of SAPR resources and their beliefs on the availability, trustworthiness, and capabilities of these resources. Finally, members offered their perspectives on how to encourage reporting.

Familiarity with Two Types of Reporting

- **Nearly all participants indicated they were familiar with the two options for reporting a sexual assault.**
 - *(Multiple yeses.)* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *(Multiple yeses.)* (E1–E4 Male)

Method of Learning about Reporting Options

- **Nearly all participants indicated they knew about the two options for reporting from training and safety stand-downs.**
 - *“At least once a month, at a minimum, we get told about those two types of reporting.”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“Through the semi-annual training that we do. And also during safety briefings we always talk about SAPR, because that's one of the big things now. So safety briefings every Friday we talk about SAPR. And then we do quarterly training now too, we try to identify and try to let, especially junior [members], know what's the two different types of reporting procedures.”* (E7–E9 Male)
 - *“For our unit that information is reiterated at every single safety stand-down, and we have one just about every two months.”* (O1–O3 Female)

⁶ Restricted reporting allows survivors access to medical care, mental health care, and advocacy services without initiating a criminal investigation or notification of command.

⁷ Unrestricted reporting allows survivors to access the same care as those who file a restricted report, but the report is referred for investigation to a Military Criminal Investigative Office (MCIO) and command is notified of the incident.

- “*Commander’s Calls and stuff.*” (O1–O3 Female)
- **Some participants indicated information about reporting options is readily accessible through flyers and postings.**
 - “*There [are] signs posted in the bathrooms and the company area where it gives you a breakdown of what is each, restricted and unrestricted.*” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “*It’s also posted all over our squadron. We have the fliers with the UVA’s cell number for the unit and then points of contact. [And], at the bottom, the two options on restricted and unrestricted—[and] the definition of what you receive and what is triggered when you go to either—[are listed].*” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “*We have safety board or bulletin board located throughout different units and it has all of the information right there.*” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “*If they do not know, they know exactly where to go to see, because ours [are] posted in the main hallway. If they do not know, they would know where to go to see who it is.*” (E3–E4 Male)
 - “*You can’t go to the bathroom without seeing their face. I can’t go into the stall without [saying], ‘Hey, there’s Sergeant so and so.’ [Or], ‘Okay, she’s my SARC, got it.’*” (O4–O5 Female)
- **Some participants indicated they first heard about reporting options during boot camp or other initial entry program.**
 - “*I think boot camp was the first time for sure.*” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “*Actually, boot camp. I do not know if anybody remembers that. But when they sit there and they go what type of, restricted, unrestricted, that’s what it is. But do we know the definition or what goes into that, I think that we do.*” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “*I think it’s done probably at every command, at indoc when you check in, every command it’s done.*” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “*I learned about them in Officer Training School (OTS), I learned about them in Air and Space Basic Course (ASBC), I learned about them again in Squadron Officer School (SOS), I learned about it in a few Commander’s Calls.*” (O1–O3 Male)

Reasons to Report (either Restricted or Unrestricted)

Reasons for Making a Restricted Report

- **Some participants indicated they believed restricted reporting might occur more often than unrestricted reporting.**
 - “*Restricted. You still have the option to change.*” (E5–E6 Male)

- *“It depends on the individual, but obviously military culture, I think, leads people to probably doing more of a restricted report, just so others do not know, so it doesn't affect them in the future, [and] so people do not treat them differently.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated a survivor might choose to make a restricted report to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.**
 - *“They wouldn't want everyone in the company or battalion finding out. We just went through a situation where someone filed an unrestricted [report], and pretty much everyone found out and knew way too many details about what was going on. So personally, if it was someone in my own battalion, I probably wouldn't do an unrestricted report unless they moved me.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“The reason why is because I believe people like their privacy and they do not want to be looked at in a weird way, because people talk pretty much and not everybody wants their business to go out there.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“People tend to value their privacy and they do not want ripples at work.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I'd said probably restricted. Because they'd get the same help medically that they would with an unrestricted, but then they'd also get the benefit of keeping it behind as many closed doors as possible.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I would think restricted, just because they do not want everybody knowing their business. And it can be a little more private, so to speak, not air dirty laundry or something.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated gender plays a role in which type of report a survivor might choose to make.**
 - *“I feel some people will [make a restricted report], mainly guys, because when we talk about it we are talking about how guys usually do not make a report because they do not want to feel like less of a man or whatever. I feel the guys would be the one that files a restricted report [because they would be embarrassed].” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“Embarrassment. It's not just female—it's males as well. The males making it if I report it they're going to think I'm less of a man; or I'm this or I'm that. And I'm not speaking for any particular female, but the females, I do not want to get labeled as that female [member].” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“Especially if it's male on male. I've seen the stats where they're more likely to go the restricted route.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“If you're a male, it's a pride thing. If you got sexually assaulted—if it's unrestricted—everyone is going to find out about it. ‘You got sexually assaulted?’*

- 'You're supposed to be a male.' Everyone might not think less of you; [however], if it happened to me, I would feel that everyone would be thinking less of me. I would think [they'd think], 'He can't even handle himself.'"* (E1–E4 Male)
- *"I feel people like to keep their confidentiality, especially if it's a male, egos get into play, and they do not want to admit to all their buddies, 'I got sexually assaulted.' It's an embarrassing thing to say for a male. For a female I know most of the time it's someone they know closely, which is probably their fellow [members]. And that becomes a sticky situation, where okay, now I have to call out someone who's in my work center, who last week sexually assaulted me. That's another tough situation, and people hide from tough situations."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - **Some participants indicated a survivor might choose to make a restricted report because they felt embarrassed, ashamed, or were afraid of the unwanted attention.**
 - *"In my experience, most of my cases that come to me they're restricted. And I feel the stigma is that they feel embarrassed or why me and that's why they want to keep it quiet. So that's why I felt that there are more restricted than unrestricted."* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *"A female could feel guilty if maybe it happened because she had too much to drink, maybe she would feel like she let herself go. And especially if that female is married or something."* (E7–E9 Female)
 - *"I think restricted most likely just because they'd kind of be embarrassed about the incident."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *"Restricted. Pride, embarrassment, feeling like they did something wrong, so on and so forth. They do not want to go forward because they do not want that to be publicized. Get a lot of public scrutiny and attention when you go unrestricted."* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *"I think initially it would be restricted, because they do not want their business out there. Even if it could help them seek action against this other person, I think it's just the embarrassment that would initially make them go for restricted."* (E5–E6 Female)
 - **Some participants indicated a survivor might choose to make a restricted report because they feared repercussions or retaliation.**
 - *"Restricted. It goes along with retribution. That's why they're going to keep it restricted versus non."* (E7–E9 Male)
 - *"A victim might choose a restricted report for fear of backlash and retribution. I remember listening to a commanding officer go through the training and he was like 'I want to know and what can I do; I want to find out.' 'I know there was a restricted report; I want to know.' I thought that was interesting. There seemed to be a lot of*

push back from the COs on the restricted report. Because they know this is a hot issue and they want to hold someone accountable to make sure they were doing their job.” (O1–O3 Female)

- *“I would say restricted. Just probably because of fear of reprisal or other things like that.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“Restricted. What I’ve witnessed, if people choose to go to unrestricted there’s fear of people in the unit finding out and people tend to take sides and then there’s a split in the unit, people talking about it, everybody knowing their business. Whereas if it’s restricted, you do not have to worry about that fear of reprisal in a sense from different members in their unit. So people tend to not want anybody to find out about it.” (E5–E6 Female)*

Reasons for Making an Unrestricted Report

- **Some participants indicated a survivor might choose to make an unrestricted report for a variety of reasons (i.e., resolution of issue, expedited transfer).**
 - *“That’s simple. It clearly occurred. They want to resolve the issue.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“It’s sad to say also it’s a rank issue. I think it would be easier for [a higher ranking member] to make an unrestricted report than it would be for [a lower ranking member] to do so.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“It depends on the individual. If there were physical wounds and stuff they might have to explain that to an extent. I think it’s just going to vary from individual to individual. That might lead them a little bit closer to doing unrestricted because there [were] physical [wounds].” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I’ve seen a greater increase in unrestricted reporting in the past decade specifically. I guess we could talk at length as to what to attribute that to, but I think in part it has to do with the positive changes of attacking sexual assault, that we view it more as a team effort attacking an enemy as opposed to limited people. And so that tells me we’re taking it more seriously as a system.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“[By choosing unrestricted and having an opportunity for expedited transfer], people know they have a way to get out of the command quietly and to start over. I think that’s encouraged a lot of people to report.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Some senior participants indicated survivors might initially make a restricted report, but then convert to unrestricted, while other times a restricted report results in an investigation against the survivor’s preference (e.g., if command is notified by a third-party).**
 - *“I think part it’s education; they go and the first several days it’s ‘I do not want anybody to know about it, this is what happened.’ there will be an anger mechanism*

that comes forward and then they'll want to, after talking to [SAPR] reps and everybody, I've seen them change, sometimes from three to seven days, into an unrestricted." (O4–O5 Male)

- *"I think the restricted reports moving into the unrestricted reports are probably more so from peer pressure because that individual has told someone that they truly do confide in or trust (i.e., family member) and that person is consistently probably urging that individual [saying], 'Hey, so and so is gone, you need to report this' or whatever the case is. And that's probably what moves that report from restricted."* (O4–O5 Male)
- *"I've dealt with cases where the Platoon Sergeant—because they're new—they do not understand that once you ask the [members] so many questions, they're forced to tell you. You're losing that right for them, so automatically it becomes unrestricted. So they do not have that choice to make restricted."* (O1–O3 Female)
- *"You can always go from restricted to unrestricted. So initially, yes [restricted]. But I think most victims after a while, they get more comfortable talking about it, they know their options. And pretty much they do not want it to happen to anyone else. So they definitely make that choice to revert over to unrestricted because you're helping yourself more and future victims."* (E5–E6 Female)
- *"It takes some time to be able to get to the point where they can go unrestricted and before they can go to public and proceed through the judicial system. So by doing the restricted reporting, it gives them time to build up to the point of being able to go a little more public with it."* (E5–E6 Male)

Decision to Report

- **Some participants indicated the type of report would depend on several factors (e.g., comfort with other people knowing, the survivor's relationship to the alleged offender, command climate).**
 - *"It depends on the individual, but obviously military culture I think leads people to probably doing more of a restricted report, just so others do not know, so it doesn't affect them in the future, so people do not treat them differently. Whereas if you're a civilian working for a company and you get sexually assaulted, that person is gone, no big deal. But here, it's the military culture that would lead I think to more restricted reporting I think."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *"I think it would just depend on where they are at, what their command climate is. I think that people are more inclined to talk about it nowadays vice before, no one wanted to come forward especially with males now."* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *"I think it depends on their personality. If it was a co-worker or a friend, somebody they considered a friend, they might be more towards restricted, just to minimize*

- workplace conflicts. If it was a stranger, they'd probably be down with unrestricted."* (E3–E4 Male)
- *"I'd just say it depends on the situation of the assault. Oftentimes if it's by a peer, there's not apprehension for an unrestricted report. But if it's a senior, it's a whole different ball game."* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *"I think it just depends on the situation and the person's willingness to come forward. While a restricted report is nice to have, a lot of times that doesn't necessarily get prosecuted the way it should or handled the way it should. It depends on the nature of the situation, how long things can go."* (O4–O5 Female)
 - *"It depends on their own personal mindset going in. [They may think someone is] 'Going to pay for it.' They're going to go unrestricted and they're going to make sure it's addressed. A person who wants to keep it private—they're more embarrassed by it, [then] they're going to go restricted. I [also] think it depends on the nature of the assault; [e.g.], if someone was severely raped—especially I would imagine a male-on-male—that they would not want that public knowledge."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - **Some participants indicated a survivor might choose not to formally report at all, because some survivors would not trust the system or would fear backlash.**
 - *"I think a lot of people wouldn't [report]. I do not think they would go restricted or unrestricted; they would just keep it to themselves. If you get an all-male unit and another male assaulted a male; then if it's unrestricted and an investigation going on, everybody would know about it. Their family probably would know about it and stuff like that. And then at the end of the investigation, if they're the victim and they do not get justice the way they want it to be, they feel like it was unjust. They do not trust the system anymore."* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *"Goes to court of public opinion. If I say, 'I'm going to do an unrestricted report, that means not only am I being judged, but the perpetrator is being judged, not in the legal system but in the court of public opinion. Even if [go] unrestricted, the rumor mill happens, regardless of however much you try to hold it down. It's a severity of action, state of mind, and who do you really want to know this. People are going to be judging the [victim and assailant].'"* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *"I think there are a lot of things that happen that still go unreported. And it's very unfortunate. But, there's a stigma that if you are a woman, if you are a man and you report, there's just going to be some backlash. It's unfortunate, but it's the culture of the [Service]. It's just how people seem to joke around. They still seem to maybe not take it as seriously as they should, unfortunately."* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *"People do not want to catch the backlash from their chain of command or just get attention rather than actually going and doing the unrestricted, whereas it's an open investigation and then leadership is going to [say], 'We have a spotlight on our work center.'" (E1–E4 Female)*

- *“I actually had one of my [members say], ‘If I ever got sexually assaulted by a Captain or above, I wouldn’t report it. [He then asked me], ‘Do not you see [that] all E–8s and above or O–3s and above, [they are retired] or nothing happened to them?’” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Some participants raised concerns about the time it takes as the report is being investigated, and the potential impact that might have on their military career.**
 - *“I think a big thing about it too is time. If somebody was involved in a case and they were gone most of the time, then I would know they’ve got something going on, putting two and two together. I think that is why people stay away from reporting in the first place is because they understand or they maybe see that these cases take forever, years. There have been cases open for court martial for over a year. That’s time away from normalcy.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“You’re going to see someone disappear one day, and then everybody is going to wonder why and something is going to get told. Usually from what I’ve seen is they try to actually split the individuals into another unit or something, get them out of the vicinity so they’re not dealing with each other and no interaction. But at that point it’s kind of everybody knows. People do not want to get their business out there, so they tend not to say anything because they see what happens.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Some enlisted participants indicated the perception of false reporting and victim blaming might deter survivors from making a report.**
 - *“People will be talking in the galley or something about someone, ‘Oh, did you hear?’ ‘They’re investigating so and so because she said this.’ But I think she’s lying because she’s a [expletive].” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“[If] it happened with somebody in their shop, they do not want to be looked at [as the] ‘Boy who cried wolf’ or the ‘Girl who cried wolf.’ [People] do not want to ruin anyone’s career, so they do not say anything.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Within our culture, retaliation is a big fear, I think; and if it’s a person that is high up on the chain of command, a lot of people would be like ‘He wouldn’t do that’ and they won’t believe the person.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“Restricted—most of the time—because it’s shameful and sometimes the peer group might think the person is just making it up and it can affect the performance. If you are being tagged as a sexual assault victim, only half believe you and probably that half would probably be females like you. The other half [might say] ‘You’re probably full of [expletive].’ It’s hard coping in a work center like that.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“If you’re a female, if you get sexually assaulted and you reported it, and everybody knows about it. I’ve seen it happen before [where] everyone [says], ‘Just stay away from her; she’s going to report you for doing anything.’ [Or], ‘[If] you talk to her the*

wrong way, she's going to report you.' Then, sooner or later, that female gets sent somewhere else." (E1–E4 Male)

Venue for Making a Restricted or Unrestricted Report

- **Some participants indicated they knew the appropriate person to take a restricted report (i.e., SARCs and VAs).⁸**
 - *"Directly to the certified SARC" (O4–O5 Female)*
 - *"The 1–800 line is promoted quite a bit. And that 1–800 line goes to the SARC, and the SARC calls the UVA. So even if a victim is not going to the UVA themselves, that's who gets contacted by that 1–800 line." (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *"Your SAPR [representative]; doctors." (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *"The Victims' Advocate." (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *"Medical doctor." (E5–E6 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they are not sure they know the appropriate person to take a restricted report.**
 - *"Chaplain core [or] medical." (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *"Military family life counselors (MFLC)." (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *"Isn't a doctor a mandatory reporter?" (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *"It depends on the state's medical laws for that one." (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *"Is it medical that once you report, it becomes automatically unrestricted? I know that for a couple of them if you report to them, your case automatically becomes unrestricted. I'm just not sure which source." (E5–E6 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated a survivor could make an unrestricted report to their chain of command.⁹**
 - *"Your chain of command." (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *"Pretty much anybody in the higher chain of command, or someone who would be able to pass it up the chain to help people to get you help." (E1–E4 Male)*

⁸ The current restricted reporting channels are: SARC, VA, and a Healthcare Provider or Personnel. While Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel and chaplains have confidentiality/privilege, they cannot accept a restricted report.

⁹ The current unrestricted reporting channels are: Law Enforcement/Military Criminal Investigative Organization, Commander, SARC, VA or healthcare personnel.

- *“Unrestricted would be in your chain of command. As a supervisor, if my troop comes to me and says that, it's automatically unrestricted.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- *“Supervisor.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- *“Once it gets to the command loop, you have a responsibility, doesn't matter how it got to you, you're required to follow up on that in certain ways as a leader.”* (O4–O5 Male)

Members' Perceived Preferences on to Whom to Report

- **Some participants indicated they would reach out to their SARC or UVA/VA to discuss an incident of sexual assault due to familiarity with and trust of these individuals.**
 - *“I think I would go to one of the Victims' Advocate. I probably also would go directly to a medical provider. And in my unit it feels like it's kind of whoever is available for that position.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“The UVAs at our unit, at least one of them is definitely a really nice guy. I know I would talk to him about a problem. He's pretty humble, down-to-earth.”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“I think it's more like if they're around more, because there's two VAs that are head VAs, but then there's also sub VAs within your shops too, and you can talk to them. And they'll report it up. So they might not be the whole command VA, but they're within your division, shop or whatever. So you'll be able to talk to them.”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“I am close to my [SAPR] rep. I could tell her everything. But, I probably wouldn't talk to her if I wasn't as close.”* (E1–E4 Female)
- **Conversely, other participants indicated they would not reach out to their SARC or UVA/VA to discuss an incident of sexual assault.**
 - *“I [would] go to my church. That's who I talk to about everything. Because I need to talk to people that I am comfortable with. Especially if I do not know them, I'm not going to go up to you and tell you what's going on”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“I do not know if I believe the people who are appointed to those positions are sufficiently really trained. Because the [Service] rush trains you on things. So I wouldn't know if they're really sophisticated or know enough about the situation and what care to have with a person who's been like that. So I do not know if I would really talk to them.”* (E3–E4 Male)
 - *“I wouldn't talk to the VA. The guy in my shop is a regular guy; I wouldn't trust him with something like that.”* (E7–E9 Male)

- *“I’d go to my best friend or family members before I would go to the VA, because I trust my best friend, I trust my family; [they’re people].” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“Whenever there’s a sexual assault, whoever their peers are that they are comfortable with, that they live next to, they’re best friends with, that’s who they get to talk with first.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“I think most people would go to peers first.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they were unsure about whether they would reach out to their SARC or UVA/VA.**
 - *“I think that’s a situation dependent issue.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I do not really know. That’s difficult. When that happens to you, that’s really difficult to talk about.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“I know that they know that they’re there, the VAs, but it’s [the member’s] preference what they really want to do.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“It just depends on the circumstances.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“It depends; say if I’m really religious, maybe I’ll be more apt to talk to the chaplain. It depends on the individual. Maybe that they know the UVA was one of their Sergeants and they know that they’re a good person in general [and] maybe they know that they’re trustworthy. Because sometimes there [are] UVAs that I see gossip all the time. I do not trust them.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated how they would respond if a survivor disclosed an assault to them personally.**
 - *“Send them to the [SAPR] rep.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“If the victim came to me, I would be like ‘Come on, we need to go here.’ ‘If you want me there, I can be there.’ ‘But if you do not want me, just realize I will be here.’ ‘You do not have to tell me that information, but just realize I can be here to help you in other aspects.’” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“If something has happened and we are having a one-on-one discussion and they start saying something, technically I am obligated to stop them at that point to allow them the opportunity to [say], ‘Look, if you continue with this conversation, I have to go unrestricted. ‘If you want it restricted, you need to go here and I will go with you and at that point in time, you can make that decision.’” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“My understanding is when one of your subordinates comes to you, then you are supposed to report it. However, at least for me, I was taught if you think they’re going to say something incriminating or something related to SARC or whatever, just interrupt them and say, ‘Hey, before you tell me, if you want to call the SARC office,*

do we need to do anything before that. Because if this is related to any of this stuff, I have to report it.' Just making sure that they understand that. You can still help them and get them to the right avenues as their supervisor and stuff without forcing them into a mandatory reporting situation.” (O1–O3 Female)

Ability of SARC or VA to Properly Handle a Report of Sexual Assault

- **Some participants indicated they trusted SAPR representatives to handle formal reports appropriately.**
 - “Yes, definitely.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “Yes.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “The SARC or VA. Yes, those particular entities.” (O4–O5 Male)
- **Some participants indicated reasons why they would trust a SARC or UVA/VA to handle a formal report appropriately, including their training, experience, and knowledge on SAPR issues.**
 - “We're selecting senior NCOs that have proven that they're able and capable of instilling trust and confidence within their [members], and they want the position. [It] seems to have paid dividends for our organization because people know if they go to those NCOs that their word is a bond and they're going to handle it properly.” (O4–O5 Female)
 - “I think it's how you handle yourself in your original job, whatever job that you're given. If you dismiss things or you put things off to the side all the time or you pawn them off on other people, it gives your junior [members] the idea that you're not somebody that's going to take a problem and follow through with it and you're just going to shove it off on somebody else. So if you have that kind of mentality or that kind of attitude, then I would say no, they're not going to trust you.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “They're usually pretty outgoing people that you would feel comfortable talking to, because otherwise you wouldn't recommend them.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “I think visibility is really important. It's going to vary by every base, but if you have a SARC that sits in their office all day, people aren't going to want to go talk to them. Where if you have a SARC who's active and out and about and goes to visit squadrons and actually is out on the base, people are going to be a lot more wanting to go talk to them because they actually know who they are and they'll have a conversation with them and it's not as scary to talk to them.” (O1–O3 Female)
- **Conversely, some participants indicated they do not trust SARCs or VAs to handle reports properly or that it depends on how approachable the SARC or VA is.**

- *“I think it depends on the person because I’ve been in units where someone was the SARC or the [VA] and I would not tell that person anything just because I know who they are as a person. I think people choose the job because it looks good on paper, but they’re not actually qualified.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“Sometimes they put perverts in charge. It’s like [they] picked the biggest pervert in [our] battalion and made him the VA.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“[I know someone whose] VA was a Sergeant that tried to hit on her in the barracks when he was drinking. How does that make sense [coming] from a person in that position[?]” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“People tend to go to their peers first, and then sometimes those peers report it. They’re trying to do the right thing, trying to help that person out, but sometimes [the report] ends up becoming unrestricted, whether they want it to or not. I just think people feel more comfortable going to their peers—whether that’s officers or junior or senior enlisted.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“I had one SARC in particular that—during one of our [annual] trainings—who proclaimed, ‘All men are rapists and [that’s] just the way it is.’ There [was] a roomful of 50 of us [and we thought], ‘Is this a trick question?’ No; she was serious.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- *“I’d want to go to a chaplain because they’re more like a mentor or somebody who can just speak with me and [then] I can decide on my own. I think the SARC has been trying to change [their] image, [being seen as more approachable]. There’s been a few times where they’ve come around and talked about having a dog or a little room where you can go sit in a massage chair. I think they’ve been trying to change that, but it’s just not there yet.” (O1–O3 Male)*

Opportunities to Encourage Reporting

- **Some participants indicated they did not believe anything more could be done to encourage reporting.**
 - *“We put out Military OneSource and the 1–800 SARC number. [There’s] SHARP. [There’s] every agency that is known out there and we put it out there to the formation. I truly do not think [there is anything more to do].” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“The only thing that would help, which we really have no control over, is just the culture of reporting. It’s getting rid of the stigma that people who report are lying or just got drunk and made a bad mistake. There’s no program that’s going to fix it. I think we’re moving more towards that.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“The whole program has gotten so much more attention over the last few years that I think we are moving more towards that. It’s brought up so often in the training; you can’t get away from it, you can’t escape it. Everyone knows about the SAPR program.”*

- I think it's becoming something that's more commonly talked about and accepted.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“We have annual training and [each] commander here implements supplemental training. I do not think there's anything more we could do about encouraging reporting.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“Something else I would like to add to that is the [Service] does not operate in a vacuum. We all came from society, and society has a view on this matter. So the way somebody is afraid to report out in the real world is the same attitude somebody might have still in the [Service], although you have all of this information flying around you. Although they didn't come out of a vacuum, they came out of society. That plays a role into probably with this too.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I honestly think what they're doing is enough and will be enough. I think just the culture change is going to take longer than how long it's been. Now that they know reporting will not negatively affect your career, which was the big stigma before, I think it's just going to take longer for people to actually believe that and see that and understand that. I think like it's on the right path, just staying with it.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - **Some participants indicated increasing trust and confidence of members in the reporting system would be useful. This could include publicizing case dispositions/punishments, minimizing “leaks” of information, and clarifying points on collateral misconduct.**
 - *“If we actually started hearing about consequences that happened for reporting, so the person got help and the perpetrator was actually punished with something, we would have more confidence in actually wanting to report.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think some of it's the fear of the collateral misconduct, in the case of an underage person drinking, what have you, is afraid of getting in trouble for something like that. Again, that's another very command driven thing in that it is at the O6 level as far as adjudication. Most O–6s are more concerned with the greater crime, if you will, and low level collateral misconduct is not an issue.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“Having the chain of command say ‘If you are sexually assaulted, do not be afraid to come talk about it.’ ‘Do not be afraid to report it.’ [Also], continuously telling [members], ‘It's okay; we're going to work on this together.’ Let them know they're not going to be in trouble because a lot of people shut themselves out, thinking, ‘I can't say anything or I'll get in trouble.’ ‘I'm going to lose my job.’ “ (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think in these trainings most of the information that's put out is from the unrestricted side because the restricted process is restricted and it's confidential and it's this gray area of the unknown. Maybe that's some of the fear of going even*

restricted and having things be confidential because you just do not know the outcome.” (E5–E6 Male)

- *“The victim needs to hear is it's not their fault and it's not the end of their career. Usually that's what usually holds most victims back, [thinking about] ‘My job.’ ‘What will the public think?’ And, ‘It's my fault.’” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“I think that there [does not need] to [be] more training, but more clarification; whenever you overreact, whenever you get the victim and the perpetrator and their rights start to conflict, what happens? All this legal speak starts to develop and that makes its way back into the training. 99.9 percent of the time there is gray area with these and you need to talk it through.” (E5–E6 Male)*

Chapter 4: Retaliatory Behaviors

The Department is committed to maintaining an environment of good order and discipline with dignity and respect for each member. Retaliatory behaviors of professional reprisal or ostracism/maltreatment are neither tolerated nor accepted in policy or practice. The DoD prohibits these behaviors (punishable under section 892 of Title 10, United States Code), and is exploring in more depth the behaviors survivors of sexual assault may experience as a result of making a report, as well as the best way for leadership to address these behaviors. To that end, the 2015 FGSAPR inquired about the perceptions of retaliatory behaviors as well as the use of social media as a means to retaliate against someone for reporting sexual assault or unwanted gender-related behaviors (i.e., sexual harassment and sexist behaviors).

The most recent quantitative data on retaliation (i.e., perceived professional reprisal¹⁰ and perceived ostracism/maltreatment¹¹) experienced by military Service members was gathered in the 2015 Workplace and Gender Related Survey of Reserve Component Members (2015 WGRR). The WGRR results indicate around one-third of members (31% of Reserve component members) reported experiencing either perceived professional reprisal and/or ostracism/maltreatment as a result of making a report of sexual assault. Similarly, 38% of military Service members who brought forward a report of sexual assault and volunteered to complete the 2015 Military Investigation and Justice Experience Survey (2015 MIJES)¹² indicated experiencing either perceived professional reprisal and/or ostracism/maltreatment. Prior survey results have also shown that members who experienced unwanted gender-related behaviors might not have reported it officially because they fear some sort of retribution (DMDC, 2013b). As such, this issue is an area of concern for the Department.

General Understanding of Retaliation

- **Some participants indicated fear of retribution is one reason why someone might not report a sexual assault, though this may also take the form of victim blaming.**
 - *“If I had an incident, why [would I] even try [reporting]? I’m not going to be taken seriously especially [since] I am an artillery officer and I work with the infantry. If I were to say anything, everyone would [think], ‘You are just trying to ruin our image, you are lying, you are just causing trauma, causing trouble, etc.’ ‘This is why we shouldn’t have ever had females in combat arms to begin with.’ [There are] a lot of negative connotations. If someone were to do something negative against my*

¹⁰ Under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), reprisal is defined as “Taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense.”

¹¹ Ostracism/maltreatment is defined as “Ostracism and acts of maltreatment committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by other persons because the member reported a criminal offense.” These acts are punishable under the UCMJ.

¹² The 2015 Military Investigation and Justice Experience Survey (MIJES) had 323 respondents who filed either an unrestricted or restricted report prior to Fiscal Year (FY) 14, during FY14, or FY15, and had a closed case. The survey results were not weighted; therefore, rates are not generalizable to the full population of survivors.

professional career, even socially, I report that too. Then, what happens? No one takes it seriously.” (O1–O3 Female)

- *“Males get assaulted just as well. I think they are less likely to report it. I think one of the reasons is maybe not command repercussion but societal. At least in [the Service] that is the stigma that goes with that.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“I haven’t seen it happening [retaliation], but I think that’s the number one reason why people do not report probably is because of that [fear of retaliation].” (E5–E6 Male)*
- *“When a person that was sexually assaulted comes forward, they just feel like a weight to the command. They feel like people hate them, people dislike them, people do not believe them. This person, they’re like, ‘You know what, I’ve heard of so many things that I need to come forward and I need to talk about it, I need to be an advocate for this.’ Then they do come forward and they get kicked off the ship; or they do come forward and all their peers turn on them. They do come forward and their leadership is rolling their eyes, like ‘That didn’t really happen to you.’ ‘You got drunk; you were the one that put yourself in that position.’ That person that comes forward, they just get beat down.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“A member had something happen to her at her first base. She was [then] treated [differently] at work; it wasn’t the same [and] she didn’t get the same type of respect. [Her co-workers] would double think everything she said [and would make comments such as], ‘She’s the type of girl that would sleep around or and now this guy got on her bad side.’” (E5–E6 Female)*

Understanding Retaliatory Behaviors as a DoD Prohibited Behavior

- **Some participants indicated they were aware maltreatment, ostracism, and professional reprisal are prohibited under DoD policy and/or Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).**
 - *(Multiple affirmative responses.) (E1–E4 Females)*
 - *(Multiple affirmative responses.) (O4–O5 Mixed)*

Perceived Occurrence of Retaliatory Behaviors

- **Some participants indicated they could imagine retaliatory behaviors happening at their installation and/or have seen it (i.e., ostracism/maltreatment and/or professional reprisal) happen to a survivor for reporting.**
 - *“I’ve seen [social and professional].” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I’ve seen it happen firsthand and [at] multiple duty stations.” (E5–E6 Female)*

- *“I’ve seen it happen.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Other participants indicated they could imagine retaliation happening as a result of reporting a sexual assault, but have not seen it first-hand.**
 - *“Yes. It could happen at any installation, no matter what installation.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I could definitely see how it would happen.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“I wouldn’t say it’s something that I have seen, but it depends on where you work at or who you work with.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I can see that happening.” (E3–E4 Female)*
 - *“I believe it happens, absolutely; especially if the accused is somebody a lot of people like. And, people absolutely are going to say things.” (E7–E9 Female)*
 - *“It depends on the command climate as a whole. If you all work together really well, you all know each other really well; I can’t see retaliation being that much of an issue. But if you really do not have a lot of unit cohesion and everybody is kind of back stabbing, I guess I could see retaliation happening.” (E3–E4 Male)*
- **Other participants indicated they could not see and/or have not witnessed retaliation (i.e., ostracism/maltreatment and/or professional reprisal) occurring.**
 - *“There might be a small percentage of people that may retaliate against the victim. And, then there’s probably the other 90% that would like to retaliate against the assailant. But, neither one of those honestly are probably going to happen. Do I think retaliation would happen? Honestly, no, I do not think so, especially against a victim. If anything, the victim would get a lot of help, especially, if it was unrestricted.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“No, I haven’t seen it happen; and I do not believe it could.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“We do way too much training and we talk about it on a constant basis, so it’s always known what the procedures are and it’s always known the consequences for the victim. We put it out [that] if you commit this act, then you’re going to go quick up the mast; you could lose your rank; you could lose your money; and/or, you could be kicked out of the [military].” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I do not see it happening.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I’ve never personally seen it.” (O4–O5 Female)*
 - *“I do not think anyone, any command, any organization would be maliciously holding back someone’s career. If you are in a small community [and] you transfer to another command, people are going to know that you just transferred outside of your*

rotation cycle. 'Why did that happen?' They're going to know there are problems.'
(E5–E6 Male)

Perceived Types of Retaliatory Behaviors

- **Some participants indicated social exclusion (i.e., ostracism, shunning) for reporting a sexual assault might be the most prevalent form of retaliatory behaviors.**
 - *“Being ostracized has happened [and] it does happen. If the attacker or a victim, however you want to say it, were in the same place and we can't really move them because the investigation is going on. If the member who was the attacker is popular, I have seen them normally get everybody around them and the victim is ostracized.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“It's the culture—we stick together, we form cohesive groups. If there's a person that's doing something different from everyone else, we'll tend to either shun that person or try to bring them back in-line. A guy is not going to come out and say that this happened to me and it was another one of my battle buddies because people are going to push that guy away. It would be embarrassing anyway for him to come out and say that. The fear of retaliation is real and the retaliation would be real, the person would be ostracized.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“If it's a [member], it's probably going to be ostracism, especially if the accused is someone who is well liked. ‘Oh, [he's] a good dude; he likes to go out and party.’ ‘We have fun.’ ‘The victim is just out to get him.’ On the leader level, it would be reprisal.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“The social aspect. It's not because they report it; I think it's because we do not know what to say. It's more awkward for us because we do not want to talk about it, but at the same time we can tell that you're not feeling right. There are feelings that go on in social interaction; it's hard to be all happy and go lucky when you know this person just got sexually assaulted. It's very difficult to do. I think that that's one of the reasons why the social aspect happens more.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“People are going to stay away from you. They're not going to talk to you the same way; it's not going to be the same anymore once they find out or they somehow find out.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“That's ostracism of friends and peers of the victim—or the assailant also.”* (E7–E9 Male)
 - *“Nine times out of 10 they know who did it. It's somebody close to them; possibly somebody they work with that did it. They'll be ostracized from that group. If they're not worried about their friends, they're worried about co-workers. God forbid it's a co-worker or even a supervisor. They're going to be the black sheep of the division.”* (E5–E6 Female)

- **Some participants indicated retaliation might be more common among peers (i.e., ostracism) than from leadership; participants discussed both potential incidents and those witnessed first-hand.**
 - *“It's not typical from the chain of command; it's from your peer group.” (E7–E9 Female)*
 - *“I think the social piece is going to occur way more than [reprisal] as it's almost easier to see if your leaders are retaliating against somebody. You may not catch them all, but that's easier to see than [ostracism] or easier to correct. You can fix it within work, but outside of work you can't make sure your members are inviting every single [member] out.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I think the peer to peer is more common. I've seen the peer to peer here on the duty station more than I've seen the reprisal from the command.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“The one you were going to see more I think is the social portion of it. If you do see the professional one, that's going to be pretty rare because [it's] recordable. You know when someone does that. The social one, that's all perception, that's all based off of what people [think happened].” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I can see peers retaliating. Usually when these things happen peers know about it; they were involved, they were there, or saw something. They tend to know information. Then the peers say, ‘we do not want to deal with her, we're not going to hang around her.’ So they're being ostracized.” (O4–O5 Female)*
 - *“You'll see repercussions nowadays. It's never from the command or senior members of the command; it's always their peers.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I would argue that less so on professional [retaliation]. I would think people wouldn't think that someone would actually come out and say, ‘Do not report this.’ But, I think the societal reprisals are a big issue.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I think peers would be more apt to do that than leadership. Leadership is going to be professionally bound to carry on and report. The peers at the barracks, the base, and whatever, they're more apt to take digs at each other. That will go unnoticed or has been unnoticed or, you know, unreported.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated when members become aware of a report of sexual assault, peers might gossip and speculate; victim blaming might also occur.**
 - *“[It's] ‘He said, she said’ or ‘He said, he said.’ Who do you side with; who do you believe? Person A or person B? You have a constant retaliation where people that aren't even actually involved in the situation are fighting about ‘I can't believe you believe him over her’ and ‘I can't believe you believe her over him.’” (E5–E6 Male)*

- *“I’ve heard about sexual harassment or assault and a lot of it is talk among the junior [members]. They’ll [say], ‘Oh, they’re just trying to get special attention.’ They’re thinking it’s the victim’s fault, like nothing happened.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“The chain of command may be great in not retaliating, but pretty soon you’re in a command of 180 people and 180 people know what happened. ‘He or she wouldn’t do that, I know them better’—if they are in the same command. You have this rift in between and it is victimizing. There is retaliation. The victim [has] to deal with stares, the looks, the gossip and everything. That’s a form of retaliation.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“If someone goes restricted and then maybe later—probably a month later or two months later—they decide to go unrestricted, that’s when they get the most backlash. Why bring it up now? It’s been so long. When that victim doesn’t take that initial restricted approach, then that’s when they get the most backlash.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“Let’s say [the report was made against] one of my friends. If it’s your friend, you want to like back him up. You do not know for sure. She could be lying or not; maybe she has a bad reputation or maybe she has a great reputation. I could see relationships with that individual that the report is being filed against, that could definitely be a motivator for someone if they wanted to be retaliatory.” (E3–E4 Male)*
- *“People would feel like they have to walk on egg shells around you and just feel like they can’t be themselves with you anymore. It’s—not that being themselves isn’t necessarily a bad thing—they feel like they cannot be straightforward with you. It’s a tense situation; it creates a tense environment for the workplace.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they have witnessed or could imagine retaliation by leadership in line with either professional reprisal or ostracism/maltreatment.**
 - *“You’d kiss a promotion out the window. Not just sexual assault, but anything; you could have a problem with someone in the chain of command. ‘Good old boys.’ If I called out the Captain for abusing funds, now I’m that guy. I’m going to be stripped of additional duties. My performance review is going to look like I do not have anything to do.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I’ve seen reprisal take the form of the negative performance evaluation and it definitely effectively ended that individual’s career.” (O4–O5 Female)*
 - *“If the people who are upset with you are in a position above you to handle something in relation to you. They may not do it so overtly as to get themselves in trouble, but there are small things that people could do to give you the short end of the stick if they wanted to.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“If your command thinks you’re a liar they might [say] ‘Oh, you were slated on that deployment; guess what, you’re not slated on the deployment anymore.’ They won’t*

let you get the opportunities that you know that you are qualified for that you're probably even more qualified than some of your peers, and you've been waiting to do that. They have their own opinion of you.” (E5–E6 Female)

- *“A former roommate reported an incident; and, thereafter, she was continually picked on by her NCOs, as well as, staff NCOs—not necessarily directly, but indirectly. She would come home every day just crying about stuff like that. She also did like an extension so that she could possibly do a Permanent Change of Assignment (PCA) somewhere or a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) somewhere outside of that unit and that was denied.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated examples of what they believe ostracism might look like or what they have seen.**
 - *“I think [ostracism] would [look like] not trusting that person that you're ostracizing. A lot of times females are often ostracized for reporting a crime and just their leadership do not trust them; or, other males that they work with wouldn't trust them because they do not want to be reported for something that they've said or done.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“People quit inviting you to social events, quit inviting you to lunch, that kind of stuff. I think you're most likely to see that than see the written down stuff that can be proven. You're most likely to see the ostracism like that.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“You have a situation where someone has reported a sexual assault; if you do not believe that happened and you disagree with that assertion, maybe you sit away from them at a table at lunch.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“[E.g.], if everybody goes to lunch at the same time, the member won't be invited. Just going from their shop to the dining facility; they're not invited. If somebody is going to gather around and watch a video on YouTube, they're not invited. If an email is sent out, they were purposely left off if they were on there previously. It's the little things that they will do or can happen that eventually chip away at them being in the group.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“When a bunch of [members] are at the smoke pit and one of the people involved in whatever case it is walks out to the smoke pit; [then] all of a sudden, [those already outside] just go away. They just want to stay away from that person. They do not want to be involved in a situation or be any part of that legal stuff.’ Do not tell me anything; go to the VA.’ The other [members] do not want to hear anything about it because all of a sudden they're going to be brought into the case.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“They're walking around you and [they say], ‘do not want to get too close, you might tell somebody.’” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“When I've seen other people that have reported sexual assault, it's from then on they're in their own world. Nobody wants anything to do with them. They're*

- isolated; they do not have friends. People that were just acquaintances just sort of gravitate away because they do not want to be involved or risk being implicated in something.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- *“People start making them feel like an outcast in the group. There are cases where people are in a division nobody talks to that one individual; they're kind of excluded because they made a report and nobody believes them.” (E3–E4 Female)*
 - **Other participants indicated directly observing examples of ostracism.**
 - *“I've seen the ostracism in other units where—not so much where they exclude them from the squads—but you see in social gatherings where someone that was once a part of a larger social network is no longer a part of that.” (O4–O5 Female)*
 - *“Judgment. Everyone thinks they know what happened; they weren't there, but everyone, of course, is the one that has the answer. All of a sudden our entire training series just knew what was going on and everyone was convinced she was a liar. [Leadership] moved him. This wasn't done for her for the longest time. I saw her spiral; she couldn't deal with everyone looking at her a certain way. They all basically turned on her because they were basically his best friend.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Everyone tries to figure out who it is. When they start to figure out who it is, they're like looking at that person like I do not want to step too close to this person because they might go and tell somebody that I did that. And like I've seen it before, where like it went unrestricted, and then they moved the girl to the company office. So it's just like everybody knows what she did and they were still talking [expletive] about her. But then they just put her in the company office because they said you know what, maybe if we put her here, then it won't be that uncomfortable for her at work. But you know what, it still is. She still goes to the barracks and people still talk stuff.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I've seen where they're name calling the female ‘SAPR girl.’ A lot of the time I think how the victim is going to be treated is going to be dependent on their reputation beforehand; unfortunately by her peers, not the chain of command. A hard worker, somebody everyone likes—they're going to more supportive. Someone they do not like as much, they're going to get ostracized. It's back to high school again for picking sides.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I think the ostracism comes from a defense mechanism for their buddy. I've heard a couple of situations where people where they've said, ‘I do not feel comfortable being around that person anymore because I do not want to be either drawn into their mess. They were only kind of my friend, so I do not feel comfortable now hanging out with them.’ Sometimes it's not even that they're actively against the individual, as much as they do not want to be drawn down into the potential situation just by being on the outskirts. So, they just isolate the person more.” (O1–O3 Female)*

- *“Somebody hit a female on the rear, as a joke. I've seen from that, this very popular person, all of a sudden was ostracized because of the fact that she came forward and was upset about him touching her in that manner.”* (O1–O3 Female)
- **Some participants indicated the belief that if a senior enlisted member or an officer is accused of sexual assault, that they might receive different treatment than lower ranking members, or that the report might not be taken as seriously.**
 - *“It's absolutely perceived by some of our young members that if you've got a young Staff Sergeant who's a perpetrator, it could absolutely create an environment where the young [member] believes that they can't go over their head. Or, they could face UCMJ type action for not using the chain of command, which is a farce, but they do not know any better.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“If you accuse someone in the chain of command who either holds a high position, commander of some sort, or someone who's thought highly of, then it's going to be like oh, that person is making it up, they're just a problem, they need to move. They say it's non-retaliatory.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“I know that when stuff happens usually for separation boards, they'll have a council, usually people in the [Service]. They will push people through, saying ‘They're about to get out of the [Service] anyway.’ ‘They're going to [have a PCS]; they're about to leave.’ Why should we make a big deal about it when they're not going to be here and they do not have to see them again?’”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“There was a trend while we were [in country] that in many cases the attacker was a senior person with credibility, established reputation within the organization. They chose victims that were like new to the organization and lacked credibility. ‘You're the new person; how could this happen?’ ‘This guy is awesome; he's been with the organization forever.’ Social ostracism occurred because that person was new; they didn't have a reputation and they were making a claim against somebody that did.”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“I've been involved in investigations where this has crossed my desk and it's always a senior [member who] assaults a junior [member]. There's going to be a lot of reprisals. Everybody is going to go to the junior [member] and say ‘It's your fault.’”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“There was this lady who accused her Chief. After reporting the Chief, I noticed that the person put in charge kind of tagged this lady which means that whenever she would associate with the older male group, the supervisor would just go to her and say ‘No, do not sit with that person because it's a male; go sit with this person.’ I asked her one day, ‘Why do you do that?’ ‘Well, she just got a Chief punished; I do not want her to do the same thing to these people.’ Discrimination usually comes from the supervisor. They kind of tag you.”* (E1–E4 Female)

- **Some participants indicated if professional reprisal occurs, it may appear subtly, such as a person receiving an unfavorable task, additional work, or less work.**
 - “[The commander has] to make a decision to put [the accuser or accused] on a different shift if [they work] together or if your whole squadron is day shift only then removing you to another area. Something is going to happen, something has to change if [the report is] unrestricted—whether or not it's direct retaliation or just change in general.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “If you are going to try to isolate, you are going to make matters worse for yourself because then I can put you on harder jobs that you are going to spend more time here at work because of that [behavior].” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “I could see it happening. If the perpetrator would be someone who is of higher rank, it would be very easy for something like that to happen. I mean, if your boss outranks you and he's in your chain of command, he or she, you well have to do what they say, and it could be anything as simple as just making you do latrine duty all the time or giving you the bad details all the time.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “There's ways of retaliation that make it look non-retaliatory.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “[A commander may say,] I thought they would be a good fit for that extra duty. Or, that's just how they ended up on the duty roster; all of these people have duty exemptions, so they're going to be pulling this duty all the time.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “Where there's hands on type of control (e.g., the squad leader, platoon Sergeant, E–5, E–6, or E–7) and when it comes to tasking and general day-in and day-out duties, there are ways that they can make someone pay. Who does the grunt work or the dirty work in the motor pool? That's where I would see more of the professional [retaliation] these days than promotion or something like that.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “The only way I've seen [leadership retaliate] is putting [a victim] in a job where they can't cope. Not necessarily saying on paper, ‘This person sucks.’ They make sure to keep you where you are and then let everyone else go to schools, get more knowledge, go to study sessions, stuff like that, and then leave you behind, so. And peers, they just put them down.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I'm aware of a [member] that allegedly was involved in an incident and this [member] found himself on guard duty for quite a while. He [was] sitting in a tower for a 12-hour shift just by [himself]. It wasn't shared; it wasn't a good schedule. He got that duty a little more than others.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “There's very underhanded ways that people can retaliate against you as well. Let's say I was to report something about somebody higher than me. They may not outright take me off the flight schedule, but what if my flights become fewer and fewer? Eventually I start losing my quals, and they just say I wasn't cutting [it].

There's no way to prove it; but, that could be a way of retaliating. I then could get forced out of my community and lose my reputation as a good pilot. (O1–O3 Female)

- *“There are options if you want to ostracize somebody. You can send them off to auxiliary security; people disappear into that and that's a black hole that just eats up the member's time. I'm just saying the option is there and we can always do it. We do not do it and I've never seen it happen.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Some senior participants indicated perceived ostracism may be more likely among the junior ranks than from leadership.**
 - *“It was the peer group, [not anyone] up the chain.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“As far as the social ostracism [and] as the leader, [you] do not, won't and typically wouldn't know unless someone else came up to tell you [is occurring]. What you can't prevent against is what happens in the barracks with peers.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“It would be hard to prohibit ostracizing another person by a whole group. The higher ups are the ones that would probably be able to do things like take administrative actions against people. But, probably for most of our levels, maybe not the E6, but most of our levels, it would be ostracism and still be around the group.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“You can inform the accuser of the social reprisal that could happen and hey, if this is happening, we're probably not going to see it but let us know and we will stop it. That's one of those things that we inform the accusers of.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I think at your lower levels peers tend to hold grudges and segregate. That's isolation; ‘Stay away from that person.’” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“[By] categorizing your upper level management and your bottom level or your base level, you'll see it more down there than you will up here.” (E7–E9 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated there might be a perception of professional reprisal against someone who made a report of sexual assault; however, the actions might be due to time requirements of the investigation or performance issues and not directly in response to having made a report.**
 - *“He couldn't focus enough on the job and couldn't give a hundred percent. With our job, that is extremely dangerous, because you're essentially putting not only the base populous at risk but fellow responders at risk. We transferred him out of our career field into a different career field; he ended up getting out of the [Service] all together. [Due to] that transfer, that could technically be considered reprisal. I think when you are talking about reprisal, you have to look at the whole picture instead of just saying, ‘The other person got moved out of their work section.’” (E7–E9 Male)*

- *“I think that if the sexual assault affected the member's behavior at work that it could lead to that. While they're going through that process, their work could decline. They're going through a very stressful situation at that time and they're not getting the support and help they need and there's going to be a direct impact on their ability to perform, which in turn could lead to a lower rating or paperwork or things like that if someone is not necessarily understanding what they're going through.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“I understand you got things you got to go do, but performance-wise, you're not here half the time. I can't evaluate you as well as I can the other people. It's not reprisal; I think it's just the reality is we need every able body person here to be working. I can't evaluate you, so how am I going to put you ahead and give you high marks? It's not a punishment, but some people may feel like it is. Nothing to do with [the case].” (E7–E9 Female)*
- *“The [Service] is trying to [do] the right thing, period. We look at, ‘are they getting reprisal or not?’ When it comes to sexual assault, we are doing the right thing. When a Master Chief is writing an evaluation or signing on evaluation, they're going off of the black and white. Was the person here to put in the hours for work? Did the person put in extracurricular activity, being a coach for young kids out in the community? Did the person do extra collateral duties for the ship? When you [rate] person A and they're now a victim, and their resolution time has taken so long, they weren't able to fill those blocks in on the evaluation or a [member] of the quarter package or a [member] of the unit package. He simply couldn't fill in those billets for that [member] to say that they're being an outstanding [member] simply because they just weren't available to do those things.” (E7–E9 Male)*
- *“So sometimes it could look like reprisal. [E.g.], it's somebody higher up in the chain that's accused of something. They're going to get pulled out of their job during the process. If the process takes two years, this guy is sitting stash somewhere not doing anything for two years. His evaluation is going to suffer because he's not doing his job. You have to be able to distinguish between a real legitimate evaluation and something that's reprisal.” (O1–O3 Male)*

Perceived Motivations for Retaliation

- **Some participants suggested reasons that might motivate retaliation and/or perceived retaliation might occur including fear of how to interact with the survivor, prior relationships, and due to victim blaming.**
 - *“People fear what they do not know and it's a lot easier to just assume than to ask somebody.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“The only thing I can think of is if it was someone within the unit and there's personal friendships made within the unit and that kind of spills over to the fact that this other person who was reported against is a friend of mine or the fact that she reported a*

sexual assault within the unit and not even going to bother talking to her because you're afraid of what could happen to anybody else.” (E5–E6 Male)

- *“There was a female member who said that something had happened at her first base and it followed her to her second base and then her next base. When she showed up to work, they had already known the story of what had happened to her. I know leadership does have to speak to each other, so leadership sometimes calls and says ‘This is what happened,’ and then word can trickle down from there depending on who they say what to. From what I gathered, they looked at her like she was a liar; they were saying that she was the type of girl that would sleep around. The way she was treated at work, it wasn’t the same. She didn’t get the same type of respect. They would double-think everything she said.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“If they’re friends with the person that did it; or, for some reason do not like the victim.” (E1 E4 Female)*
- *“Someone may not believe the person. Or, if the victim is someone in the shop and the person that’s being accused is in the leadership, then people might be upset because it’s affecting the leadership.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“The ‘Buddy system.’ ‘The ‘Good old boys club.’ Not like it couldn’t happen [with] a female on male assault. Especially, if it’s private [so-and-so] and [an] E-8, E-7; why would we take your side against this person who’s been in for 18, 20 years?” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“We do not want to believe these things about our battle buddies. If someone comes out and says one of our battle buddies did something like this, we do not want to believe that. It’s human nature. We’re not going to, unless it’s cut and dry. If it’s cut and dry, then of course.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- *“A lot of people are scared; they do not know how to approach a victim? What do you say to someone who made an unrestricted report? And I guess from the outside looking in, it might be easier just to talk with the person who’s the offender. I do not know why, but it might be easier to talk to them rather than a victim because [the individual] so fragile.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“If you’re a victim and your attacker is someone who’s popular, you’re going to think that no one is going to believe you. You’re going to think that they’re going to say you’re making a false report. You’re going to think that it was somehow your fault. You’re going to think that they’re not going to like you because you’re going to get this guy in trouble, and so it’s better just to kind of keep it to yourself.” (O1–O3 Female)*

Suggestions to Prevent/Mitigate Retaliatory Behaviors

- **Some participants indicated it may be difficult to prevent ostracism/maltreatment as the strategies used to address these behaviors may be perceived as unenforceable.**
 - *“Nothing [can be done to stop retaliation from occurring].” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“People are going to talk. It's up to the person knowing what happened and [not listening to other people]. At the end of the day, whatever happened, happened; you can't stop it. It's going to happen.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“What's really hard to take care of is down at that lower level because if somebody is sexually assaulted, we're trying to give them their privacy rights. But if he or she says something down at that level and everybody knows about it, then it's hard to control.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“How are they going to enforce the ostracizing? I'm going to force you not to avoid this person? The talking is understandable; but again, how do you force someone to not avoid another person?” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think even with the training a person, they would not be inclined to care. If somebody says, ‘No, you're not going to be rude to the victim, ‘You're not going to do these kinds of things to them.’ I do not think they could care. They're going to do what they want to do, because that's their way of making themselves feel better about ‘My buddy got in trouble because of you, so I'm going to do this to you.’” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I do not think there's really a way of getting rid of [ostracism]. People are people. It happens in high school and college and the adult world, so to speak. I do not know how to get rid of that.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I do not know if you can. It's a human nature thing. It's part of covering your own butt. You do not want to get involved in something that's going to get you in trouble.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I do not really know. I mean, reprisal is not allowed. But ostracism is a function of like the social circles on board or in the command or what have you. So you can't like make people be friends with people or have lunch with them if they do not want to. So it's not really up to any sort of training. That's going to be dictated by the character of the people in the command. They're either going to be understanding or they're just going to be not nice.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I think in cases where both the accused and the accuser are in the same command, I think that's where you are going to get the people picking sides. [If] you have both people in the same command, it's human emotions that someone is going to blame one person and not the other or, whether they're believing the victim or the accused.*

I think people will naturally, in their own minds, believe the person or not; or, they're going to pick one side or they're not.” (O4–O5 Male)

- **Some participants indicated continued emphasis by all levels of leadership is needed to prevent retaliation from occurring.**
 - *“The problem is reprisal; the process for that is more black and white, but it's still difficult to hold someone accountable. Ostracizing is even more of a gray area because in the event someone were to show up at my doorstep, as the Inspector General (IG), I'm going to take the report, plug it into the system, and then determine which agency should work this. It goes right back to the commander. If the commander or the commander's chain of command is the problem, nothing is resolved.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“You have to train them, and that's just not commanders; first Sergeants, that's platoon Sergeants, squad leaders—because that's where it starts so they can squash that at the lowest level. I think it's just teaching them separately than your quarterly SAPR training. It's bringing them in, teaching them what that means and having the commander do a reprisal plan, develop a plan for his company.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“Good leadership.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“You can't control the barracks. I think NCOs are vital in everything that we do; I think for the most part, they're vital when we can't be there and we can't see things—especially in the barracks setting like that.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“If the leadership is just doing their job, if they're involved and they're paying attention, if they smell anything funky, like someone is doing some form or reprisal or anything like that, they just need to squash it. It's really under the command of the leadership to make sure something like that isn't occurring.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated organizational/command culture and policies might prevent retaliation from occurring.**
 - *“People speaking up if they see it. I feel it would be more difficult for somebody who is a victim at that moment to speak up because they're already in the spotlight.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think it should start with each and every one of us. If you see it or hear it you can stop it right there.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“If we do not at least educate and socialize it up front, then it's not going to get better if you just let it go.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“As soon as you know [who's involved], find a way to separate them to stop the ostracization, the potential of reprisal. Stop the daily interaction between those individuals.” (O1–O3 Male)*

- *“Keep pushing that it's not allowed, the same way we push sexual assault, sexual harassment—it's not allowed; and neither is retaliation.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“The only way I could think of is to start from the beginning, all the way from boot camp, telling people not to [and] not encouraging the environment that leads to that.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“There's the peer group [where] there's a perception that's brought up straight from boot camp and the schoolhouse and many other things.; it [starts] from the chest pounding and military jargon, referring to those dirty males, those dirty females. Quite often, you guys are referring to it in a derogatory sense. And I refuse to listen to them, and I say I'm being tougher by not listening to you and standing by this. And in the end what you end up getting, though, is lot of females regardless will still go to the perception of the walking mattress, regardless, which doesn't help with the fact of everybody deciding in the peer group to sit there and basically say, ‘you know, I'll bet you she's lying.’” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“Just enforce the rules that are on the book. It's already well established in policy what happens. Like whistle blower protections for the [military], they're already there, just enforce the rules and policies that are in place.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- *“I think it takes a culture shift because you have a lot of your more old school, they need to suck it up and deal with it, or they do not realize they're causing problems for the unit overall. Then as culture changes and as the [Service] changes, you have a younger somewhat crop of leaders. But, you get your older school leaders who [say], ‘It's not a problem.’ Or, ‘That's just another female causing problems—why are they really here.’ It kind of depends on how long someone's been in I want to say and how they were brought up, which you can't control.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they do not recall retaliation being discussed to any extent, if at all, in their SAPR training and were uncertain if it would completely prevent retaliation from occurring.**
 - *“I do not recall seeing a lot of that as far as reprisal or after [a substantiated case]. Maybe that's something else that can be put into training? If you are [retaliated against], then these are the avenues you have, you know what I am saying, or this is the definition for the both. This might be something that needs to be included in the training.” (E7–E9 Female)*
 - *“I do not know if we have enough training to differentiate a lot of times if it's the person being ostracized. I do not know if our young members know if they are being actually ostracized against or not. They just know they are treating me differently and they'll associate that with being ostracized and that might not be exactly what is going on.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“There's not a lot of talk about the retaliation. They kind of skim over it. ‘Do not be afraid, come out.’ ‘It's okay; nothing will happen to you.’ They do not emphasize,*

- 'This is not going to happen.'* Put [it] in big bold letters, *'This is never going to happen.'* They can't say *'It's never going to happen.'* They can't guarantee it." (E5–E6 Female)
- *"I do not think that it's ever addressed whenever we are getting our training."* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *"I do not think the training is going to eliminate [retaliation]."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *"Just because I'd like to think it wouldn't happen because of the training doesn't mean it wouldn't. It really depends on who the people are and how people know about the situation. If it's kept to who needs to know, then it shouldn't happen. But, if people are running their mouths and talking about the situation, that's when it can come into that situation, when people do not follow the protocol and they talk about it like they shouldn't."* (E5–E6 Female)

Social Media and Retaliation

- **Some participants indicated they believe social media might be used for retaliating against peers for reporting sexual assault.**
 - *"It might depend on if there's an article written about [a case] and John Q. Public picks it up and then you'll see some. Then it might be the opposite, retaliation against the perpetrator. I can see that kind of as a social media outlet that's used against people."* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *"The social stigma would not be nearly as bad; but, if I do not know the person on the internet forum, people are brutal, laying into him."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *"You can use social media to retaliate against anything; it's just there."* (E7–E9 Male)
 - *"I do not think there's going to be official backlash like a punishment or anything. But [unofficially], like on social media, definitely. I feel like informally they'll do it; there's going to be a lot of retaliation and revenge."* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *"I think [social media is] the biggest way to retaliate."* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *"[Memes] can indirectly refer to any sexual assault victim. They might just be putting it up for fun and games, but it indirectly hits this person in a soft spot because, I mean, they were a victim of a sexual assault. You might not intentionally be doing it, but it still hits them."* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *"All their Facebook friends start unfriending them. That makes it ten times worse; because now they had friends on there that kind of drop them [since] they do not want to be associated with them."* (E5–E6 Female)

- *“I think you see it a lot, whether it comes across as that or not. You still see the victims being blamed.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe social media might be used to stalk and/or cyberbully survivors and/or peers for reporting sexual assault.**
 - *“Bullying happens online all the time. I’m sure even more so with victims of sexual assault and other things too. People are rude on the internet because you’re anonymous.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“[Social media] is now a big topic too, especially with the bullying and everything else. Some people will get on Facebook or whatever social media site and they do it here at work; what they do not understand is that COM is actually monitoring this.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“They post everything and they’re going to say, ‘so and so did this; she’s an [insert expletive here].’ It spreads rumors and then you end up with people posting pictures they photo shopped or created memes out of. It almost becomes viral within their friend group or network. Then you see that person too and [you hear] ‘I do not want to work with them’ or ‘I’m not going to talk to them.’” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“Cyberbullying, I’m sure, is no different than someone reports sexual assault and they’re friends with a few people in their unit or squadron. Someone might message them [saying], ‘You’d better shut up.’ [Yet,] they might not post about it on their wall.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I’m part of a couple groups on Facebook and sometimes I have to kind of unfriend these myself because they do get carried away [with inappropriate memes]. I think that bullying or that retaliation, it may not be even coming from the people you know. I believe it’s there, on so many different levels.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I had a client who faced online stalking because she reported an incident and a Service member came by her house pretty often and posted notes on her Facebook page.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I’ve never seen anything personally, but I’ve heard people say, ‘I have been attacked verbally or through social media, saying they’re liars.’ Or, they’re harping on the person about the way that they went about the situation. I’ve never seen it first hand; I’ve just heard it through other people.” (E3–E4 Female)*
- **Conversely, some participants indicated they do not believe social media is used for retaliating against peers or have not witnessed it first-hand.**
 - *“Not retaliation, more just jokes about the [SAPR] program.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I’ve never seen it online and I’m online, I’m online a lot.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I do not hear stuff like that on there.” (E5–E6 Female)*

- *“I would probably say not. And the reason being is because social media is very easily captured. So anyone can screen shot if Jenny or Jamie said something.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- *“It would be very rude of someone, but then you are leaving paper trail for yourself. We’ve been trained that when you do that you’re going bye-bye, so it’s not very likely to happen. I’m sure it does, but I have not seen that.” (E1–E4 Male)*
- **Some senior participants indicated the use of social media might differ among ranks and/or officer versus enlisted members, and might be perceived to be a generational or cultural issue.**
 - *“When you’re told of a situation because it’s in your flight and they didn’t come to you first [about retaliation on social media]. They went to the commander or first Sergeant first; and then it came back to you. Typically we talk to everybody and say, ‘if you hear any rumblings, let’s just cut it off here. Do not plaster that all over Facebook. Do not talk and/or text about it. Just leave it alone.’” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I think if you asked your enlisted crowd or junior NCO they would probably know better what that is. If I was in college I would know what it was.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“It’s culturally totally different. The young [Service] members come in and they look at it is totally different than people that were around when [social media] came out. Totally different. Social norms.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I think we may at our level hear something, but we’re probably not on the Twitter feed of a Lance Corporal. That is probably in the highest percentage to be the victim in the age group generally of some sort of sexual assault—not that it cannot happen to any age or gender.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“It’s probably a question the junior [members] might be able to answer better. They’re there all the time.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I personally have not. I do not do social media. You hear about it on the news, you hear about the bullying and all that stuff but I do not have anything to pinpoint something that happened to my [men and women].” (E7–E9 Male)*

Chapter 5: Sexual Harassment/Sexist Behavior

The 2015 FGSAPR assessed participants' perceptions of unwanted gender-related behaviors.¹³ Participants described their perceptions of sexual harassment and sexist behaviors in the current environment and provided their observations on improvements made in the command climate and handling of these issues. Members also answered questions on reporting, retaliatory behaviors, and prevention as they relate to these behaviors.

The Department continues to investigate the role of social media in various aspects of Service culture. To that end, participants described the types of social media they perceive to be used in cases of unwanted gender-related behaviors.

Understanding Unwanted Gender-Related Behaviors

Perceived Sexual Harassment

Defining Perceived Sexual Harassment

- **Participants were provided the definition of sexual harassment and asked if they were aware of this definition; most were.**
 - *(Multiple head nods.) (E5–E6 Females)*
 - *(Multiple affirmative responses.) (O1–O3 Males)*
 - *(Multiple head nods.) (E1–E4 Males)*
 - *(Multiple yeses.) (O1–O3 Females)*
- **Other participants indicated there might be confusion over the definition of sexual harassment versus sexual assault, and whether sexual harassment is considered a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) or Equal Opportunity (EO) issue.**
 - *“[It is] usually [trained on] together by the SARC—even though sexual harassment falls under Equal Opportunity (EO). It can be very confusing to people.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“In my experience they are so closely linked together in briefings that sexual assault [and] sexual harassment, [they] do not really split far from each other. I think we definitely understand the difference between them.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“Sexual harassment and sexual assault get twisted. Sexual harassment is trained [on], but SAPR is beat into you. Anything sexual in nature is automatically*

¹³The term “unwanted gender-related behaviors” is used because it captures a range of unwanted behaviors that are punishable by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

SAPR, when it could be you made [an] innuendo and a [member] reports you for SAPR.” (E7–E9 Male)

- *“Sexual harassment is not as black and white as sexual assault. It's more like, ‘In the eyes of the beholder.’ It really depends on the person that you're making the joke to for sexual harassment. Sexual assault, that's more — that's cut and dry. That's obvious.” (E1–E4 Male)*
- *“People do not really get the difference between sexual assault and sexual harassment.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“Sexual harassment falls under the Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) program; there's so much that falls under the MEO program that it gets pushed to the side. It needs to be more in the SAPR program, not the MEO because [sexual harassment] leads to sexual assault. Why have it underneath a totally different program?” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“I think it's kind of confusing how that falls in with SAPR because it's more of the equal opportunity reign, so it's talked a little bit about along with SAPR but not as much.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“[Sexual harassment] is harder to define [and] it's harder to know where that line is. It's hard to know when that one person in the corner is uncomfortable or when you've crossed the line. Maybe you feel like you didn't cross the line, but somebody else did?” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Most participants indicated they were aware that sexual harassment is prohibited by policy.**
 - *(Multiple yeses.) (E7–E9 Mixed)*
 - *(Multiple yeses.) (O4–O5 Mixed)*
 - *(Some yeses and some head nods.) (O1–O3 Females)*
 - *(Multiple head nods.) (E5–E6 Females)*
 - *“Yes.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“Yes.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- **Most participants indicated sexual harassment receives the same emphasis as sexual assault during SAPR training.**
 - *“Yes.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“It's [all] kind of rolled in there [together].” (E5–E6 Female)*

- *“For the most part.”* (E1–E4 Female)
- *“You’re not going to hear about sexual harassment without hearing about sexual assault. They’re linked.”* (E1–E4 Male)
- *“Absolutely.”* (O4–O5 Female)

Perceived Occurrences of Sexual Harassment

- **Some participants indicated examples of what they may have witnessed as sexual harassment.**
 - *“Locker room talk.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“As a medic, I do not know how many times I have been harassed in the exam room [by] the male patients. There are some privileged where you do not really have [a] supervisor standing there [to intervene].”* (E7–E9 Female)
 - *“It usually is [someone] constantly being asked to hang out with them, [trying to] get the person one-on-one.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“Cat calling.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“[Comments such as] ‘You guys are acting like a bunch of girls’ or ‘You must squat when you pee.’”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“We were going to go to a Christmas party and [the person] walked by my office and said ‘Ma’am, do you like my jingle balls?’”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“It could be something seemingly innocent; e.g., a member responds with ‘That’s what she said.’”* (E3–E4 Male)
 - *“The work setting just like inherently tends to steer away from harassment, but if you have to see somebody at work that was doing whatever the night before, then everything kind of falls in on itself.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- **Some participants indicated they believe they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment, however, it might not have been seen as such by the alleged offender.**
 - *“All depends on the severity of it. If it was a joke, it’s not something set [or seen as sexual harassment].”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“It depends if it actually offends the person or someone in the room. I do not think everything that is said, if you are around people that you just hang out with, needs to be reported.”* (O1–O3 Female)

- *“People do not realize, ‘This is so inappropriate; we’d better stop.’ [No one] appreciates coming to work in the morning [to hear someone talk] about jacking off on [their] La-Z-Boy while your wife is gone.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“I think some people like treat sexual harassment as a joke. If you’re working with people every day and you’re with those people every day, they think it’s okay.” (E3–E4 Female)*
- *“It really falls on ‘What was your interpretation?’” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“From my understanding, it’s all about that one word or, [e.g.], unwanted advances. If they seem okay with the banter, then that’s fine.” (E3–E4 Male)*

Intervention in Instances of Perceived Sexual Harassment

- **Some participants indicated they believe leadership treats members with dignity and respect, stepping in and saying something when hearing of and/or witnessing sexual harassment.**
 - *“The commander comes [and conducts] monthly walkthroughs, where [the] commander will walk through to make sure you do not have a Playboy hanging up on the wall or something.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“Sometimes people joke around [and] if an NCO hears it, [he’ll] say ‘You need to stop it.’” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“[One of my members] Facebooked [his direct report] when he was drunk and said ‘You’re hot.’ He also [made comments] to her at the office. As soon as I got wind of it, [he was] in my office and dealt with swiftly.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I’ve had to step in a couple of times and say, ‘What you just said’ or ‘What you just did that was a little bit inappropriate.’” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“My CO, he’ll check the Chiefs and the junior officers when they’re running their mouths. But, I think it needs to be more than just one person at the top of the totem pole, especially when our CO is very junior himself.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Someone made an obscene joke [during check-in] and the Chief actually pulled that person aside to talk about it. The Chief made sure they knew that it wasn’t going to be tolerated.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“In the past, [there were] pinup girls on the airplanes and certain magazines in the restrooms and posters on walls. That stuff [is removed and] it doesn’t have a place in today’s military.” (O1–O3 Male)*

- **Participants indicated they believe that members might react if leadership or their peers stepped-in and said their behavior was seen as sexual harassment or sexist.**
 - *“I’ve actually seen somebody apologize for it, [saying] they didn’t realize that it was perceived that way.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“They would act surprised.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“If it’s approached appropriately, [putting them at ease and] not defensive, I think they would take it seriously.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“I think they’d become very defensive or say, ‘I’m just kidding ’or ‘They’re super sensitive.’”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“I think most people are scared of being ‘SAPR-ed’ or get a reduction in [rank], [so] I think most people would back off.”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“They would get defensive.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“I know of individuals who were told [their behavior] constitutes sexual harassment and they’ve stopped the behavior. It was explained in detail, ‘What you are doing is wrong, here’s why it’s wrong, and here are the consequences.’ But, [some] people would have been told and they just never stopped. [They] weren’t explained [the consequences of their behavior].”* (E5–E6 Female)
- **Conversely, participants indicated it might depend if members would or would not react if leadership or their peers stepped-in and said their behavior was seen as sexual harassment or sexist.**
 - *“I think a lot of people [would] play it off, saying, ‘I’m just joking; lighten up.’”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“I think it depends on the person and their maturity level. They could end up going ahead and spreading rumors about you and that could cause retaliation for a person [who] reported [the] behavior. I could easily see something like that happening.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“I think someone could take it seriously, understanding the repercussions that could come [happen] if an investigation were launched. They may have never expected someone to actually call them out on it.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“I’ve seen the full gamut. I’ve seen people actually say thank you because ‘I didn’t know I was being offensive to you and I’d much rather you tell me than tell the boss.’ ‘If you do not like it, then go somewhere else.’”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“It depends on the individual. Some people [might] make a slight correction [and] they won’t do it again. Other [members] might push the paperwork. It just depends on the individual.”* (E5–E6 Male)

- *“I think it’s individually based. Everybody takes criticism differently. When your Officer in Charge (OIC) or Commanding Officer (CO) says something to you, it’s going to be a little bit different than your immediate supervisor.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated leadership might not intervene when hearing of and/or witnessing sexual harassment, or it would depend on if a member reported it first.**
 - *“Immediate supervisors in my work center [will] only say something if someone comes to them saying they’re offended.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I’ve seen a Commander smack [a female member] on the rear saying, ‘Good game.’ [Another] Commander saw it [and] took action [and] reported it. However, that was his choice—If it was another commander, [he/she might have said], ‘that’s just [that] unit; she wasn’t offended by it.’ I think you can’t make an overarching assumption [on what leadership might do and/say].” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“[Leadership] only steps in if someone brings it up as a problem. Every day they tell jokes. It’s fine until someone starts taking offense; [it’s] then when [leadership] will step in.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“I do not think [leadership would intervene].” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“It depends on who [the] leadership [is]. There’s some who are going to be not as respectful. Most of them are.” (E3–E4 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe that if someone of higher rank is physically present, harassment may be less likely to occur.**
 - *“If someone of higher authority is around, it won’t happen.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“If I listen outside the flight line, they’re like ‘Blah, blah, blah, blah.’ As soon as I walk in, I hear ‘Ma’am, how are you?’ ‘How’s it going?’ ‘It’s good to see you; how are you doing today?’ They’re perfect gentlemen. But, behind closed doors, ‘Boys will be boys.’” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“A group [of] E–3’s are [quietly] talking across the table; [it’s] not sexual harassment, but it’s definitely inappropriate. If we hear it or the NCOs hear anything, they’ll stop it.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I think most of the time it won’t happen when there’s leadership around. [In the work environment], it’s not done in front of leadership. [However, it is done] when they’re not around.” (E3–E4 Female)*
 - *“If the wrong person is in the vicinity, then the talk is going to be minimal.” (E5–E6 Female)*

- **Other participants indicated they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment in certain work centers and professions where there might be fewer repercussions or less gender diversity within leadership and units.**
 - *“If I [visit] Maintenance or Security and I were to say anything in the Ops group like they say [there], everybody would look at [me]. There's no room for profanity or sexual harassment or sexual assault or anything of that nature. It's two completely different worlds.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think it's a common occurrence in work centers for people to be making derogatory jokes. It's just a normal part of every day; people do not really think about is that offending somebody.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Certain units have cultures that are very sexual, especially male dominated career fields [and] in maintenance, the culture [is] not very female friendly. [A woman] is maybe one or two of five hundred. [There is] a certain way of talking about things, like using rape as a verb [and someone says e.g.], ‘I raped an aircraft’ when [they’re] getting something off of an aircraft.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“[As a female], in a unit that has a higher number of females or especially senior females, you see it less because [you’re] accepted. You're just another [member]. I do not know so much about if you were in the infantry brigades [versus] the Brigade Support Battalion (BSB). I think it's really unit dependent.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“The military occupation schools (MOs)—they're being opened to [include] females. [There's going to have to be] some [discussion] on harassment because [those] cultures, primarily male, have to start changing the way they think, how they talk, how they conduct themselves because [certain things will not be] appropriate anymore. It's not appropriate anyway.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“You have people that have been in 15, 18 years and then you have people who have been in four, six and a half years. [There might be] an acceptance gap. When you walk into a room, a Chief may be making a joke [that] I might be offended [by since my worldview is constructed] from the training that I got. Their getting trained is like ‘Teaching an old dog new tricks.’” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“Everyone in here would be lying if they said inappropriate jokes are not told in their work center every day. Whether it's by [maintainers] or by other people, that happens every single day.” (E5–E6 Male)*

- **Some participants indicated there might be a perception that sexual harassment occurs more among junior leaders than senior leaders, and there might be a difference in the manner in which junior versus senior leaders handle sexual harassment.**
 - *“I feel my commander would take it seriously, but I think lower than that, maybe not as much.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“For commanders, if we do not take it seriously then our career’s gone. But, for a junior NCO, he can take it seriously; and, he can also crack jokes at it. [What’s] the worst that’s going to happen to him? He may get a bad non-compliance report (NCR), he may get a counseling, or just taken out back and talked to come back and have a different attitude.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“The [military] [is] dealing with a massive generation change as far as maturity level. You’re only going to be able to do so much with the maturity level that is not much larger than their shoe size.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I think 80 percent of the [instances happen] at the lower level; i.e., probably only 20 percent are above an E–6. That’s probably where we’re challenged, E5–E6 directing E1–E2, to control [sexual harassment].” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“[If you heard] one of your senior leaders say anything [and] if it made [you] feel uncomfortable, being a lesser [rank], who can [you] really trust? Can [you] go up to them or up [the] chain of command, even though they’re not really taking it as [you] took it? There’s no stop to [their behavior].” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“The higher up the chain of command, the more emphasis gets placed on squashing it. There’s probably a higher chance that a Staff Sergeant is going to tell people to quit talking about a comment if he walks by a group of Lance Corporals than if a Corporal walks by.” But I would definitely say the emphasis on improving the workplace environment [has] increased.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I feel the higher-ups—everybody above Sergeant—is normally pretty good at keeping their comments professional. The lower the [rank], the worse it is.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“Some of younger NCOs are having a hard time drawing that line. It’s not really a harassment issue until it gets to the point [where] [they’re] undermining [their] authority because, e.g., I’m [a Corporal] and [I am] sleeping with this PFC.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“In 2011, we displayed the continuum of harm. I think that’s where it struck home with a lot of the older [members] that if we allow these, not minor, but lesser offenses to take place that it’s just creating an atmosphere where the other offenses could possibly be allowed or happen.” (O4–O5 Male)*

- “We know who our audience is and we do not [let our conversations] be [heard] by our junior [members]. If our junior [members] come to us and think we're on the same page, we're reporting that. We're not going to just sweep it under the rug; we are reporting that up the chain.” (O1–O3 Female)

Command Climate and Sexual Harassment

- **Some participants indicated sexual harassment is taken seriously by leadership (i.e., unit, command, or installation) and reinforced by a respectful and professional environment and culture.**
 - “The climate now is definitely [a] ‘One crime [military].’ The climate has changed to the point where people are afraid to even joke around about stuff because you never know who's going to take a cough and run with it. There's no room for that anymore; there's not.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “There's a pretty strong cultural understanding that it's not acceptable. There's not as much joking around the water cooler like there used to be. And, dirty jokes are very rare.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “My experience has been that sexual harassment is taken very seriously here. They do not play around.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “Every unit will have [a] safety brief once a week; that's [leadership's] outlet where on a consistent basis they have the entire unit, listening to them that there's no [place] for [the] behavior.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “[My leadership] says it's non-negotiable. There's no way around it; he's very cut-and-dry when it comes to [sexual harassment].” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I've actually seen [a] senior NCO, when a junior NCO was calling cadence, stop it immediately and say ‘That's not acceptable.’ Then they [brought] in the next [junior] NCO to continue on, firing [the former] from calling cadence.” (O4–O5 Female)
 - “If anyone makes a statement that you're uncomfortable with, [leadership] goes above and beyond, providing a point of contact who you can report that to. They always assure you ‘I will not make this public if you do not want to’ and ‘You should feel comfortable telling me.’” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “Recently, a [male] made an inappropriate comment to me and I [talked with my leadership]. I didn't expect it really to go anywhere; however, within the next day, my master Chief, XO, and CO and their XO and CO [scheduled and held] a safety stand-down about harassment and sexual assault for two and a half hours. They do not take it lightly at all.” (E3–E4 Female)

- **Conversely, other participants indicated they believe sexual harassment might not be taken as seriously and/or emphasized by all members of leadership (i.e., unit command, installation).**
 - “Unit leadership are the ones that joke about it.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “We do not see our leadership come out and really say that much about sexual harassment. If you are talking about the battalion level, the unit leadership, we really do not see that that often. We get the training and we counsel [members] and make sure [it] doesn't occur.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “It's the higher ranking member that is the perpetrator [and] feels like that they're above the boundaries.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “You can't say all leadership is mature and lead by example. There's the select few that are immature and they say stuff.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “It depends on what command it is and the command climate [and] culture. Leadership establishes boundaries—then everything else [falls] in place.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “[Those in] the upper echelon [are] the ones that I would probably trust the least to conduct themselves in a professional manner concerning sexual harassment and assault. [E.g.], lewd jokes. It's, honestly, the higher—up you go, it seems to be the worse you get.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “Situations like this [aren't] taken as serious by members [who are] really young or [by] those who were brought up in the ‘Old service’ when things were more lenient. It's sometimes hard to break bad habits.” (E3–E4 Male)
- **Other participants indicated sexual harassment might not be taken as seriously and/or as appropriately emphasized within the culture of their units.**
 - “The culture that we have accepts it way, way more because [another member] didn't touch you; [they just] made a joke.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “Locker room talk still happens and there aren't enough men saying something to stop it when women aren't in the room. It's happening even amongst men. They see that as just like joking around. When you are the uniform you can't say things like that because it sets a precedent that it's okay.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “I think it's touched on, like checking the box, but we do not actually practice it on a day—to—day basis.” (O1–O3 Male)

- **Some participants indicated there might be differences between junior and senior members in perpetration and response to sexual harassment.**
 - *“The lower people do not know where the line and [there’s] all males in the room and the word penis [is used] or [someone] says ‘You’re acting like a penis.’ If you have a female in the room, then they have to turn around and say ‘Do not take it like that.’ You do hear some comments that can be taken out of context to the point where if somebody wanted to call in and make a report, probably could be.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“[Leadership says in response to harassment], ‘I am sorry’ and ‘We’re going to talk to him.’ But, he doesn’t change. He keeps doing it [and] to other people too. I feel like there’s nothing we can do. Sometimes I feel like lower [ranks] are not supposed to exist in the [military] sometimes, I feel like they just walk over us, we do not have opinions.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“There was an instance of a Second Class who was the supervisor of his work center and made comments to [female members e.g.] ‘you’re a fat [expletive]’ [or] just anything of a sexual nature. Eventually [a female member] got fed up, went to her chain of command, a female Chief. All [the Chief] did was move the female to a night shift and basically separated them like they were children. He just got worse because he got away with making rude comments.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“Officers—they’re a lot more politically correct or a lot more professional. They speak differently. The same [applies to] Master Chiefs or Senior Chiefs. The junior Officers, the brand new Chiefs, or [members] that are a little bit older, crustier—they want to joke around and be a part of the team. They want their junior [members] to like them. It’s not always in their best [interest] for their positions.” (E5–E6 Female)*

Reporting Sexual Harassment

- **Some participants indicated they know how to report sexual harassment.**
 - *“[Members] know how to report it and who to before they even come to their first duty station.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Yes.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“Yes.” (E7–E9 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated they could speculate how they might report sexual harassment in their unit and division.**
 - *“There’s always the SAPR hotline.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“By law, if she called me a [expletive], I do not have to go to her and tell her ‘You did this to me.’ As a military member you have that authority to go to Equal*

Opportunity (EO), Inspector General [IG], Security, to address concerns.” (E5–E6 Female)

- *“We have information boards in our unit and they have [information for] the Chaplain, SARC, IG, etc. at the local installation with primary and alternate phone numbers and [where they’re located.]” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“The VA, the SARC—or, someone they trust that knows those resources. Even if [they talk to] the chaplain, it somehow gets linked back to those individuals that deal with victims advocacy [matters].” (O4–O5 Male)*
- *“The SARC.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“Through your chain of command obviously.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Other participants indicated there might be confusion on what behaviors are reportable or who can take a report of sexual harassment.**
 - *“If you do not have proof, then why even come forward? Why come in and report it?” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“Sexual assault [reporting] gets so much focus—who you go to, restricted or unrestricted, [etc.] If you asked a [member about reporting sexual harassment], unless they really, really paid attention to the training, then they’re not going to be able to tell. I’m not even a hundred percent sure on how to report sexual harassment. I assume I would go to the Victims’ Advocates or the SAPR representative.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“The unwanted sexual advances, the constant hounding to go out—these [prohibited behaviors are] not always reported. Those are the ones that unfortunately do not always get reported out.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“With sexual harassment, there’s a lot more of a gray line—where they haven’t been trained or taught what is or isn’t appropriate. There’s a lot that may be sexual harassment that isn’t reported, just due to them not knowing.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“It’s a gray area. It’s the victim [that] reports. [However], you do not know when you are doing something wrong when you are having a conversation with somebody and you think it’s light and they think it’s oppressive and intimidating.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated they are encouraged by leadership to address sexual harassment at the lowest level, addressing the unwanted behavior informally before reporting it formally.**
 - *“We talk about reporting to lowest level, talk to your supervisor, commander, first Sergeant.” (E7–E9 Male)*

- *“Talk to that person first; handle it at the lowest level first. The first thing to do is say to the person hey, that's not okay. If it's a problem, then that's when you need to take it up the chain of command.”* (E1–E4 Male)
- *“If I have an issue with someone, I'm going to take it up with them first before I go to the SHARP representative because that's serious business. I think it saves [you from] a lot of stuff [because] sometimes people joke around or play around thinking they're funny.”* (E1–E4 Female)
- *“If you can handle issues at the lowest level, that's the best way to go about it. Why put careers at risk or at stake when you can squash it right then and there?”* (E1–E4 Male)
- *“If you bring [two members together], nine times out of ten, he or she will recognize what they said was inappropriate, apologize, and that's the end of it.”* (E7–E9 Male)
- *“Always taught to handle it at the lowest level and if you get no resolution then you just go up from there.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- **Some participants indicated they perceive their leadership to be trustworthy and handle a report of sexual harassment properly and confidentially.**
 - *“Yes.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“I feel like they'd probably handle it properly.”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“They just wouldn't discuss it. Everything is really hush, hush. I do not know of any cases going on, but I know there are cases because the UVAs are busy.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *(Many head nods.)* (O4–O5 Mixed)
- **Other participants indicated it might depend on the individual leader as to whether they perceive leadership to be trustworthy and would handle a report of sexual harassment properly and confidentially.**
 - *“Depends on the leadership.”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“Just because you tell them, I wouldn't expect them to [keep your] confidentiality. They'll probably go tell somebody that they're cool with in the squadron. Then that person is going to go tell someone that they're cool with and it's going to get around really quickly.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“It depends on your unit because everybody is not going to take it seriously. It doesn't matter [if] you have a great commander or first Sergeant; everybody is different.”* (E1–E4 Female)

- *“It depends I guess to who I would report it. [I feel that you’d hear] ‘Do not say that [expletive] around here—she’s super sensitive’; [that’s how it’d be handled].” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“I feel like it depends on the severity of the situation or how that individual takes it, or if they take it seriously or not.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- **Other participants indicated they do not believe leadership would be trustworthy to handle a report of sexual harassment properly and confidentially.**
 - *“I do not think anything can be kept confidential anymore. I have no faith in that at all.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I’m just being honest; I do not trust [anybody].” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“No—especially about female [members] because there are not very many of them. It’s like putting me in front of a bunch of dogs. You’re really highlighted; and, it’s annoying.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“No. They’d all be gossiping about it. I could walk past a group of Chiefs, hear [them] talking and drinking coffee, gossiping like little girls and watching us sweep.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I feel like once the Chief knows, then everybody knows.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Even though we do have certain laws (i.e., Health Information Portability and Accountability Act [HIPAA]), people chitchat and [information] gets seeped out—In sexual harassment and DoD type situations.” (E5–E6 Male)*

Suggestions to Prevent/Mitigate Sexual Harassment

- **Some participants indicated the culture (i.e., family, organizational, etc.) of an individual member prior to serving might mitigate their perception of sexual harassment.**
 - *“It depends on who that other person is, how they were brought up, and how they take stuff. They may take [something said] as sexual harassment and they want to go report it.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think individual spaces, workspaces, [and/or] different chain, chain of commands, have a variety of different personalities and I think a lot of [members] do not see those comments as being harassment when they make them.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I’ve seen [members exhibiting those behaviors], from my experience, come from a fraternity culture. [E.g.], you have somebody that goes to a big state school and then comes into the [military]. At that point they’re 22, 23 and they’ve established who they are.” (E5–E6 Male)*

- *“You [have some who are trying] to keep the old military alive. [For] some, [that’s] just where they’re from and it’s just their norm.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“It comes from the people’s background. I’ve seen some people who have been sheltered, they’ve come in and they do not know that may be acceptable where you are from, [but], it’s not here. You either need to change; or, you are going to find yourself going out the door.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“Everyone is raised differently in different environments. They’re coming in with their own opinions and behaviors. [There are] different cultures just coming together, each learning from each other.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“If someone comes into the Service that has a propensity to like certain types of jokes, they’ll find other people like that. If you come into the Service not like that, then you’re not going to learn that behavior and learn that it is an acceptable behavior, you just continue to shun that. But, people find similar people and they’ll do that stuff behind closed doors.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- *“I think what people forget is that everybody in the military, [we] were once civilians. [People] come with your preconceived notions [and their] upbringing no matter how much you try to do the right thing. It doesn’t necessarily say is it the institution or nature versus nurture.” (E7–E9 Female)*
- **Some participants suggested ways in which an individual might address or prevent sexual harassment.**
 - *“It doesn’t really matter what shop you’re in; the key thing is clear communication. If something is not okay, just say, ‘Hey, this is not okay.’” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“They [might not] realize how [something is] sounding. [Knowing that] somebody else listening and there’s an immediate consequence, ‘oh, I shouldn’t be saying this.’ ‘It sticks with them.’” (O4–O5 Female)*
 - *“A master Sergeant walked up to me, saying, ‘I had a dream about you last night and it was good.’ [Preventing his future behavior] was as easy as ‘Do not talk to me like that again.’ He knew in that instant he was wrong. If you show that you are willing to stand up and say something, they’re going to back off you.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“To get serious about [preventing and/or mitigating sexual harassment], [the military] would make it a requirement where every platoon Sergeant and above would get their [EO/SAPR] credentials and then there would be a representative for a [member] to go to—whether it be the first Sergeant or whatever. They would know, no matter what, I can go to this person because I feel more comfortable with that individual right there.” (E7–E9 Male)*

- *“If you're a part of [a] peer group, you address it right away that you're not going to put up with that [expletive].” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“I learned [you] make it clear the first time [and the second time that you will not] tolerate it. Start drawing that line clearer, people will respect it. If you joke with them once or twice, they're going to think it's okay all the time. You just have to make it clear what it is you will and will not tolerate.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“We have a red light, yellow light, green light [scale we use when] you hear an inappropriate comment in the workplace. You'll say ‘That's a yellow light. ‘Be careful, you're almost in that red zone.’ It's [used] between co-workers that you have a good relationship with.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe an alleged offender might stop harassing if they or someone else told them to stop or pointed out that their behavior was unacceptable.**
 - *“If someone was seriously or legitimately offended, they'd stop.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“If someone was really offended, someone would step in.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think if it's approached appropriately, not to make the [person] defensive, but just have a serious talk with them, I think they would take it seriously.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“When someone really means something and someone really doesn't like it and lets that person know it, they usually stop.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“If the person seems bothered, then I would [step in and] say ‘Hey man—or woman—cool down.’” (E3–E4 Male)*

Sexist Behaviors

Perceived Occurrence of Sexist Behaviors/Gender Discrimination

- **Some participants indicated they believe sexist behavior might occur in their unit/division/command/installation.**
 - *“I think there's definitely a sexist bias in that people stereotype you if you are a female or a male [in] a certain position. I still think that's very prominent.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“All the time.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“Especially in the infantry units.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“All the time.” (E1–E4 Male)*

- “A lot more than what it should be.” (E3–E4 Female)
- **Other participants indicated they have seen or heard of specific examples of sexist behavior or discrimination in their unit/division/command/installation.**
 - “I’ve seen it. They would only call males to assist with these [takedowns]. I brought it up. ‘Why do we get trained if it’s going to be a waste of our time because this individual is not properly trained?’ ‘Why would you choose somebody who is not properly trained just because they’re a male?’ [It’s] not true in every aspect [that] males are stronger than females. When it comes to what we do, we are properly trained.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I was told once that no one would ever take me seriously if I continued to wear makeup while in uniform. And, I once needed help with my rucksack [because] it was really hurting the way it was set up. I asked a male member to help me out [and] I was just told to ‘YouTube it’ because I was female, so I was on my own.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “[They’re talking about females joining] field artillery; [consequently], we’re starting to hear a lot of females can’t do that job.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “It’s currently going on. There’s a male and a female, going for the same [administrative] job. They didn’t know that they were competing against each other [for the position]. The NCO [consequently] told [the male member], ‘This is a job for a female’ and denied him to work in there.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “The policy [on] maternity leave [now] allows 16 weeks. I am starting to hear comments, ‘You know, you’re going to be gone for 16 weeks.’ [There’s a] little bit of animosity.’ I’ve got to continue running the shop function while they’re gone for four and a half months and then possibly, thirty plus days.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “‘Wookie’ is [implying a female is a] ‘Walking mattress, [a derogatory and sexist] phrase was a big back in the day. Now, it’s ‘Wookie.’” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “I cannot tell you how many times I have been told repeatedly—recently too—that ‘Females do not belong in the military.’ I think a lot of that sparked when they allowed females on, [e.g.], submarines.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I’ve even been told this by females, ‘Look, heads up—you’re going to have to pick early on in your career of being the [expletive] or the slut.’ You’re going to be the one who’s going to be super friendly to everyone and [be assumed of sleeping with anyone] on deployment. Or, you’re going to be the [expletive] who’s standoffish because you do not want them to think negatively of you.’” If you try to be as aggressive, [pursuing] your job, then you’re overpowering. You certainly have to make the decision of which name you would rather have placed on you when people are talking about you behind your back.” (O1–O3 Female)

- **Other participants indicated they believe that sexist behavior or gender discrimination might occur, however, they have not seen it first-hand in their unit/division/command/ installation.**
 - *“The perception is that females are picked for awards over an equally qualified male. I can't say I've seen any specific examples of it, but that's the mindset [some people espouse].” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“Gender discrimination is not that big of an issue. I've assigned females and [they] have done very well in those organizations because it's performance that matters, not gender.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I was with an infantry unit for quite a while and I saw male—on—male, male—on—female [sexism]. [E.g.], there was a clerk that would dispatch vehicles and instead of calling [leadership] by Sergeant, they would address as ‘Ma'am’ because they felt that she wasn't worthy as an NCO. ‘No, I'm the Sergeant.’ ‘Yes, ma'am.’ ‘No, I'm a Sergeant.’ ‘Yes, ma'am.’” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I've seen when women have gotten pregnant that there might be some derogatory comments made. Anything from ‘She's just trying to get out of deployment.’ It's nothing I've ever experienced personally, it's been mostly hearsay.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“It really depends on the unit, [its] mixture. If you're used to being in [an] all male [unit], there's going to be jokes amongst all the males. Then, when a female comes around, they may walk in [and] you might say something or call them something. [E.g.], ‘I shouldn't—I forgot we were working with a Female right now.’” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I think it's been squashed over the last couple of years. I do not see it that much anymore.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- **Other participants indicated they have not personally seen these types of behaviors.**
 - *“I have seen our top star performers in every unit include a super sharp female who's one of them. I do not see sexist behavior or discrimination or anything of that nature.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I've been in the military for seven years [and] I have never encountered it.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“If you're talking specifically about being discriminated against because of your gender, I haven't seen that.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I never have a problem with any of this personally [now even though] I ran into them once when I first started.” (E5–E6 Female)*

- *“I’m an engineman. They’ve never been rude about it, saying ‘You’re a girl, you can’t do it.’ I’ve never had that happen to me before. I’m sure it’s happened, but I’ve personally never experienced it.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“I’ve never seen that kind of harassment in our workplace.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Some male participants indicated they believe the question of a female’s ability to perform a job might not always be considered sexist; rather, it may be a question of competency or physical difference.**
 - *“I do not think in today’s military it’s so much an issue of gender anymore rather than male and female. It’s physicality; and, can you meet the standard?” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“There’s a weird line between being a gentleman and being in the military. [E.g., I’m a gentleman and you’re a lady, so you just take one [to carry].’ We are still expected to carry [our] own weight [and more]. If we’re all equal, then there’s one standard.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I do not know how many females are going to carry hundred pound rounds, truck them from the truck to the field back over and over again. Granted there’s a number of females that can do it; but, when in full gear and 300 pounds, how many 135 pound females is it going to take to pull [someone] out of the ditch if [they] go down? I think we make exceptions just to say we’re making exceptions and that it’s equal, and I think that’s detrimental to the force.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“You can treat everyone the same, give them the same job, basing off of qualifications. Everyone thinks that males only think with one part of their body and a woman can’t be by herself which is complete [expletive]. We should be able to go out with a female. Stop calling her a female; call her a [member].” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“If I send out my female [Military Police (MP) officer] who’s a hundred pounds in the same job expectation [as the male MP], [that’s when the] comments come. The [members] aren’t doing it on purpose; they’re not like saying, ‘She can’t handle it.’ It’s just the fact. Because we’re trying to push gender equality, we are making everybody’s lives more dangerous as far as my day—to—day job goes. [I’m okay with that]; but, that’s the risk acceptance that has to be looked at and I do not think that’s an area we’ve talked about.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“It’s simply a matter of performance, at least from my perspective.” (E5–E6 Male)*

- **Some participants indicated they believe that sexist beliefs and behaviors might be more prevalent in certain workplaces or professions and might include older members.**
 - *“I hear a lot from the females in Security units who feel they need to be extra [expletive] [and] extra tough to show that they are worthy of being in those suits next to the males.” (E7–E9 Female)*
 - *“If somebody with a mouth in maintenance goes to the medical group, their unit would [become] a joke. I think tolerance levels are probably not the same throughout the base.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I’ve heard that females shouldn’t belong in the maintainer field.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think generational differences play a big role in [sexism]. I work in a section [with] a lot of the older people [whose] wives stayed home and they make comments about [having to] do the dishes.” (E7–E9 Female)*
 - *“The males automatically [are considered their] tough that they’re at this level. It doesn’t matter what you are, what MOS you are, what your branch is, [females] are automatically put down and you have to prove [themselves] to get up to that level.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“Females shouldn’t be in the infantry.’ Or, ‘Females shouldn’t be working on aircraft—females should be doing office jobs.’ [Some] haven’t become accustomed to females being able to work on aircraft, being grunts, doing all the things that we can do. They haven’t gotten accustomed to that equal opportunity lifestyle.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“We had a Chief of the submarine community. They’re not used to females, to being with girls; so, they make you feel really stupid.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“We have to go down to the zero room floor [and come] back up, carrying 90 pound shields. Since I’m a female, they tell me sometimes ‘You can’t carry that; I got it.’ [It’s as though because] you’re a Female, it’s not your job.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“When we take [competency] tests, our higher chain of command will actually pass the guys or help them out. If we do not pass, they do not help us at all.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“Depending on how operational the unit is, the more operational the unit is, the stronger the [gender] biases [present]. [They’re] just inherent in the culture of how they’ve trained up [for] various occasions.” (O4–O5 Male)*

Command Climate and Sexist Behaviors

- **Some participants indicated they have always seen their leadership (i.e., unit, division, etc.) stepping in to stop sexist beliefs or comments.**
 - “Yes. An individual claimed that another individual was holding their behavior against them because they were a female. Right away, it got to a supervisor [and] they're not afraid to talk about it.” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “We always try, if [we] see something wrong, [we say], ‘This could turn into a bigger deal and make more problems for everybody, [so] just do not do it.’” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “You always try to handle at the lowest level. [If] somebody’s got their favorite actress or actor scantily clad set as their [computer] background, as soon as [leadership] sees that [they] say, ‘What are you doing? Take that down! You shouldn't be doing that here.’” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “Once they find out, they're on it fast.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “I've had males call a female a name and it instantaneously destroyed him right there on—site. You make it known that that's not how it's going to go.” (E7–E9 Male)
- **Conversely, some participants indicated sometimes they have not seen their leadership (i.e., unit, division, etc.) step in to stop sexist beliefs or comments.**
 - “It's squashed in my office if it happens. It's unfortunately kind of subjective. If you're in an office full of males who tolerate [it], it's going to be different.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “I think it also depends on the career field and what the cultural mentality of that career field and whether they would address it appropriately.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “When you're at the battalion command level, I do not think that they're corrected right on the spot when it happens. [However], it will be discussed maybe with the Sergeant major first and then you'll see some training come down. I do not believe that the commander of the officer that sees it right there would immediately interject.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “It really depends on leadership. My battery commander [said], ‘I hate women being in the military.’ ‘Do I think you deserve to be here?’ ‘Hell, no.’ ‘But, prove it’. ‘I'm an [expletive], it's not a felony.’” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “I feel like they say they would and they tell everybody they would, but when it comes down to it they try to like sweep it under the rug.” (E1—E1 Female)

Suggestions to Prevent/Mitigate Sexist Behaviors/Discrimination

- **Some participants indicated how an individual might be able to address or prevent sexist behaviors from occurring.**
 - “It’s ‘Zip it; you’re done.’ ‘Stay in the green!’” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “I would say that it took me all nine months of deployment to establish myself within my unit to not [expletive] with me. I would like to say that SAPR helped these males stand back and start seeing us as [members] and not as fresh meat.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “Carry yourself in a professional manner. Prove them wrong. Be the better one, be the faster one, be the outspoken one. [And], do not think that it’s not okay to say ‘No.’” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “People really respect [a] person’s comfort level. It doesn’t mean they’re not going to do it when they’re not around. People know what they can and can’t say around [you] because [you’ve] established [yourself].” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “I think with the [bystander intervention training and leadership intervening, [members] feel more open to intervene.” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “Some of the females have made it very clear. ‘Hey, [expletive]; I told you, stop texting me, do not you get it?’” (O4–O5 Male)
- **Some participants indicated their training may address sexist behavior to a lesser extent.**
 - “Yes; as far as the slide [presentations] that gets sent out.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “Compared to sexual assault and sexual harassment, I would say it’s [just] a highlight.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “What I’ve witnessed is if somebody is bugging somebody, then somebody is going to step in. We’re not trained to just stand by and watch something anyway.” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “I think it’s kind of addressed in the [SAPR training]; but [isn’t a] separate training.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I think it kind of addressed these behaviors.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “Once or a twice a year they talk about [sexist behaviors].’ We are all on the same team; we all wear the same uniform.’ Not really in more detail [than that].” (E5–E6 Male)

- **Other participants indicated their training might not address sexist behavior at all.**
 - “I can't remember.” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “I do not remember it in training.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I do not think I've ever had training on that at all. It's ignored because nobody wants to admit it happens.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “Not really.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “Not really. They may touch on it a little bit.” (E5–E6 Female)

Repercussions for Reporting Sexual Harassment and Sexist Behaviors

- **Some participants indicated there might be repercussions or a lack of belief in a member who reports sexual harassment or sexist behavior.**
 - “You have to tell somebody you're uncomfortable because they might be laughing along with everyone else because they do not want to be ostracized or looked down upon.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I'm not surprised if they retaliate—especially if they have the or the position where they can actually take action against you.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “[The offender] may have never expected someone to actually call them out on it; [consequently, there might be] repercussions that could come down the line [for that member or the victim].” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “You shouldn't have to be a strong female to put up with [sexism]. A [member] was afraid to report [the discrimination] because of the climate in her particular area [and] she would have been ostracized.” (E7–E9 Female)
 - “No female wants to [say to their chain of command], ‘Could you please talk to this dirt bag Corporal that keeps hitting on me?’ Because, it's then going to be a thing [and might cause social exclusion].” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “He's a Sergeant; and, at the end of the day, [he's] in charge of your promotion. They decide a lot of your life, so a lot of people do not want to speak up.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “I've seen where people do not take the person who complains about the sexual harassment seriously because this person seems to be a very uptight person [and] who's stating things like ‘He stare raped me.’ Then, [you] do not know if that's legitimate because I do not know what he was doing.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I think it depends on the parties involved and what exactly happened. It's going to be word against word.” (E5–E6 Female)

Perceived Relationship Between Unwanted Gender-Related Behaviors and Sexual Assault

- **Some participants indicated unwanted gender-related behaviors (i.e., sexual harassment and sexist beliefs) might lead to sexual assault and provided possible examples.**
 - *“From what I’ve seen, they’re grooming [someone] to see how far they can get, testing the waters.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Sexual harassment creates a climate in which sexual assault happens. E.g., [just because] they bought them dinner or drinks or whatever, [some may think] they have a right to sleep with [someone]. [We have done a good job] delineating [these behaviors] as separate things [as well as] tying [them together]. [With those beliefs], you create [that] climate, you create [that] culture—and, that’s where you get incidents of sexual assault.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I can definitely see that happening. I think that happens all the time.” (E3–E4 Male)*
 - *“I think it happens more outside of the workplace, but within the same social group. [E.g.], buying someone a drink and slapping them on the butt, seeing if they can get away with that and if they can take it a little bit further.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think it’s possible for it to grow and turn into something else. If no one ever stops you and tells you what you were doing is wrong, then you’re just going to keep going until you get what you want.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I could see that happening if you’re making unwanted calls to another person and they’re not telling you to stop. Then, it escalates [to] you thinking that person may like you [and] it goes from harassment to actually assault.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“The bad behavior continuum [suggests] a colorful comment or a bikini calendar [that’s accepted] then [turns into] touching someone’s butt is okay or a shoulder rub. I have never personally seen it happen, [I can see them] fitting the continuum. (O4–O5 Female)*
 - *“If someone is talking to a female and they feel like they’ve got a vibe from her, they’re going to keep playing the field and push more and say something. [And], if she responds to it in a positive way, I can to try to push it.” (E1–E4 Male)*

- **Other participants noted examples they have seen first-hand of unwanted gender-related behaviors (i.e., sexual harassment and sexist beliefs) that might lead to sexual assault.**
 - “They try saying the comments, and if that gets by, they try other things.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “It went from just helping you pass your Physical Fitness Test (PFT)—‘I’m doing PT in the afternoon; meet me in the bay’ to ‘You have a banging body.’ She started feeling uncomfortable and it started going from there.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I completely understand the [progression]. [There was a male] that had ‘Dry humped,’ for lack of a better term, [another member]. It started out as sexual harassment [and] he tested the waters, figuring out which [member] he thought he could get away the most away with. He [eventually made] unwanted [and] unwarranted sexual contact.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “I’ve seen it when I was enlisted at a prior command.” (O1–O3 Male)
- **Other participants indicated they did not believe unwanted gender-related behaviors would lead to sexual assault, or they have no direct experience with it.**
 - “Because somebody plays around and jokes and might not be appropriate, doesn’t mean that they’re going to go further with it.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I could see the risks of it happening, but I haven’t seen it happen here.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “I could see the correlation, but I haven’t seen it.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “I can see it develop, but I do not think I’ve seen it.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “I do not think there’s a direct correlation between a sexual comment and actual assault, [i.e.], someone wanting to take [it] further [with] the person.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “I’ve not seen it happen.” (O1–O3 Male)
- **Other participants indicated whether they believe members would stop if they were told by leadership or their peers that their behavior was seen as sexual harassment or sexist. There were varied opinions on potential outcomes.**
 - “I think they would stop.” (O4–O5 Female)
 - “[A male member] was in an environment with some friends and his friends were sober enough and smart enough [to say to him], ‘You better back off [that female].’ They pulled him out of that situation; but, had he been left alone, I doubt he would have had the sense to stop.” (O4–O5 Male)

- “No. [Leadership] said to me, ‘Well, that’s how he is; but, we’ll go and talk to him and address it.’ But, nothing changed.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “I think it takes more than one time to tell someone [to stop]. You have to get mean [and] you have to curse someone out.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “If [leadership is] telling someone, ‘Your behavior is sexual harassment [and/or sexist] and you need to knock it off,’ [then] absolutely they’re going to stop it because there’s a consequence.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “If you told an NCO who told a junior member, they might stop. If I told another Staff Sergeant, he’d probably tell me to shut up.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “[It’s] usually squashed between those two people.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “The individual is not going to change, but he’ll respect the other individual’s boundary.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “The only time I’ve seen when you approach somebody about that and [they stop is in] the case of several bystanders saying something to the person. That’s the only time I’ve seen that person back down gracefully.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “If the peer is serious enough, [the request to stop] would probably be taken more lightly. If a Chief comes up to you and says ‘You need to stop this; you stop it immediately.’ But, if they’re serious enough, [it might have] same impact [coming from your] as [from] the Chief.” (E3–E4 Male)
 - “People do not like being called out on something that they know is wrong, [so] they’re going to stop.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “If it’s a superior or subordinate, normally it’s squashed pretty good.” (O4–O5 Male)
- **Some participants indicated they believe there have been changes in the way unwanted gender-related behaviors are addressed in the military.**
 - “Huge ramp up in training.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “Increased training that may increase reporting. We’re seeing an increase in sexual harassment [reports] just because people are actually coming forward with it now.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “I came here in ‘98 and there were certain magazines kept in the men’s room. I mean, it was just a thing, it wasn’t to be cool, it was just a thing that happened. You would never see that now; it’s a completely different world.” (O4–O5 Male)

- *“With regards to sexual harassment, any accusation of sexual harassment, whether it's via ego or Congressional inquiry or the command, it's [not] taken lightly and they launch an investigation.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- *“There's been a shift as to what was acceptable to be talked about and what's not tolerated. You conform and you accept the military's values; [i.e.], this is what you're going to do it or you're not fitting within the culture.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- *“In the maintenance world, there are definitely some old school mentalities. There was a picture of a scantily clad female riding a bomb backwards painted on the wall. They had to be painted over. The commander said, ‘I'm serious about this and I will prosecute to the fullest extent anybody that this happens to. They weren't joking around.’ (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“Before, males and females [received] training separately and [the same with] officers and enlisted. Now, we're all together in the same discussion groups and so there's not that breakdown. Treating everybody, I think, more equally, we're all here as human beings, [underscores a change].” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“I think the [report] numbers have jumped in the last how many years because folks are getting educated that sexual harassment is more than just someone making advances to you. The definition has not been re-defined, but better explained to everybody.” (E7–E9 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they do not believe there have been changes in the way the military handles unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
 - *“I haven't seen any in [change] the work center. It wasn't bad to begin with initially, but there was no progression other than people complaining [about] all the training, saying, ‘Oh, another training!’ I think [the training] desensitizes people to it and I think it does more harm.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I haven't noticed anything.” (E7–E9 Female)*
 - *“I have not seen the progression of how it's handled. I've been in for a few years, enlisted and officer and I just haven't seen a huge change overall—other than training. [There's], more training [and] more time spent [on the topic]. If there has there been any effect, I do not know.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“The bad part is you still have people who are really could care less or they just want to just shove it under the rug and run away.” (E7–E9 Female)*
 - *“It depends if you have a leader who really cares about the subject, then yes, you're going to see improvement in training and with people caring about it.” (E5–E6 Male)*

- **Some participants indicated they believe there might be some individuals who exhibit unwanted gender-related behaviors more than others.**
 - “Yes; [I’ve heard], ‘That’s that guy; he’s just the loud one saying all [that] stuff.’” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “This isn’t something where you come into the military and [then] one day you’re a predator. This is you.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “There are just [expletive] in the world.’ Guys are just going to be guys.’” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “I just got off recruiting [duty], and some of the kids, how they talk around you and how they talk when they do not think you’re listening, [what] they’re saying is just like ‘Wow!’ [It’s] not across the board, but I just know that’s [been] my experience a couple of times.” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “I can’t say it’s all males. Sometimes, it’s the [females too]. [Or], it could be the junior [Service] member or the [most senior Service member]. It depends.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “It’s not across the board; it’s a select few. Those select few are the problem people and that’s why they do not have a place in the military. If it was across the board, you’d have a lot bigger issue.” (O1–O3 Male)

Role of Social Media in Unwanted Gender-Related Behaviors

- **Some participants indicated they believe social media is used for demonstrating advancing unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
 - “I can see it happening. They [have] trained us [though], saying, ‘Do not [post] anything like that on Facebook!’” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “Social media is used for that.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - “Yes; if they have these [behaviors] in their mind, [then] they’ll find ways around it to try to accomplish their goal.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “As far as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., I could see something like that happening.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “They probably won’t tag you in it or something, but yes [it happens].” (E5–E6 Female)

Types of Social Media Used for Unwanted Gender-Related Comments

- **Some participants suggested sites that might be used for posting unwanted gender—related comments and/or images, such as Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, and Instagram.**
 - “Facebook is what everybody seems to use.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “I’ve seen totally derogatory things on Twitter.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “There are particular organizational Facebook pages, not associated with the military at all. I haven’t seen that here, but I know that does happen.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “Those Facebook pages have pictures of female [military members being] sexually harassed.” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “Snapchat—they take a picture and say whatever they want to say. Then it disappears after they send it, so there’s no way to [ever catch it].” (E7–E9 Female)
 - “I think Instagram is a big one. You see a lot of fitness pictures and [people saying], ‘Woman Crush Wednesday (WCW).’ ‘She’s so sexy; I’d hit that.’” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “There’s [a specific non—Service sponsored Facebook] page that [some Service members] go on there, [spreading rumors about spouses]. It’s reckless [since] there’s no monitoring.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “There’s a page on Facebook that’s meant to degrade female [Service] members.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “It’s a Facebook page. [What happens is] somebody is observed out in the community in uniform or on base doing something [incorrectly] [and someone is there with] their cell phone out and unbeknownst to that person in an hour, [that picture of them] is shared a thousand times.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - “YouTube [is the] worst enemy.” (E5–E6 Female)

Policies to Prevent Unwanted Gender-Related Behaviors on Social Media

- **Some participants indicated they believe there are policies, and/or they believe there should be policies, on the use of social media for unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
 - “There should be an acceptable use contract for you as a [Service] member using social media.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “A civilian would see [a comment or post on social media] and [say], ‘Well, this is what the military thinks.’ You never take this [uniform] off. Even if you retire, you

technically never take it off. It's embedded in you, so you still have to be that shining light of 'I represent the military [and] this is how we act.'” (O1–O3 Male)

- *“I know you can get in trouble for [harassing people] on Facebook. If you're basically a [Service] member, you can get in trouble for anything that could discredit the [Service].”* (E1–E4 Male)
- *“If the person affiliates themselves with the [Service] and you post that you work for a specific unit or squadron [and] you are publicly posting that you are a part of this organization; [then] yes, they have the ability and the right [to monitor]. But, if you are just on there for personal reasons and have no affiliation on any profile with the [Service], I'd say 'No.'”* (O1–O3 Female)
- *“I thought there was something. I kind of recall reading and being briefed on something that says if your professional behavior extends out past just talking to the person, and what you do on Facebook, Instagram, whatever, you can be held accountable for it because you're on duty 24/7.”* (E7–E9 Male)
- *“Yes; if it pertains to the work environment, absolutely.”* (E1–E4 Female)
- *“I had one [member] tell me, 'But, it's my page.' Okay, your page can get you out of the [Service] too.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- *“But should they monitor it? It's social media, so anybody can monitor. [There] are risks you take when you download those apps and you choose to be on social media. I do not see the issue.”* (E5–E6 Male)
- *“I do not think the laws have necessarily caught up with technology in order to protect people from that kind of behavior.”* (E7–E9 Female)
- *“There are rules in place now saying, 'You can't use social media to do A, B, C, D based off of DoD stuff.' But, you still see it happen. The websites keep getting put up and torn down and put up again under another name.”* (O4–O5 Male)
- *“Do not post the pictures up on your own profile that are going to be used against you. People forget that when you put up these stupid YouTube videos or on Instagram or wherever the hell you are putting it, it's online, it's public. People complain all the time that their stuff is being used inappropriately. You have to cross a very large line to get in trouble for what you put on Facebook.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- *“It's kind of discouraged to talk about anything work related on social media like anyways. More so because of the threat that we face with like ISIS and that sort of stuff.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- *“If you are dumb enough to post harassing comments on Facebook to somebody, you're probably dumb enough not to make your settings private and somebody is going to find out about it.”* (O1–O3 Female)

- **Other participants acknowledged that they believe some leaders monitor their member's social media accounts and some do not monitor them.**
 - *"I think they should, but it will be awful because that's our way of expressing everything we want. They should, I won't like it [because] it's my private world. It's my private world, yet it's social at the same time."* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *"I'm Facebook friends with most of my staff, not for necessarily [for] personal communication, but partly to monitor because I do know that people have saved people from having access. I have an open door policy; if you want to be my Facebook friend, I'll accept you and, now, you're on my Facebook page, so I see what you're posting. I think making sure that you have a relationship with people before you try to monitor via social media is really important, because then people know how that's used and how that's taken, if it's going to be used at all."* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *"I do not see anything that's on my members' Facebook walls, unless someone brings it to me and shows it to me, which has happened, and then I report [it]. Unless someone brings that to me, there's nothing I can do about it because I do not look at their walls and they do not look at mine. I keep mine very private."* (E5–E5 Male)
 - *"I do not have Facebook, so I can't monitor what my people are doing online. If I saw something questionable, I would definitely tell them. I feel it's my obligation to let them know that they're crossing the line under any situation."* (O4–O5 Female)
 - *"With Operational Security (OPSEC), they may think 'I'm okay because of OPSEC [rules].' If you are posting pictures of lewd females on your page and you're following the brigade page, the brigade is going to see your page and you are going to get called out on it."* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *"I think [certain] pages need to be monitored. [With] females [now] going to Ranger school, there were so many comments on there. I think they have the right to delete [those comments] because that's not that personal person's page. I think they have the right to monitor those pages."* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *"I think headquarters watches Facebook. I've seen an email that went around that has the actual Facebook snapshots of sexual harassment."* (E7–E9 Male)
 - *"We check our young [members]. 'Let's see what they are up to, let's see what they are posting.'"* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *"I think there should be a bigger push in just talking about perception [that] if that member was not intending to post something that was offensive or harassing to another individual, that there should be some sort of threshold set to where somebody says 'Okay; that's the line and you stepped across it.' And then have conversation. Maybe not official punishment, but it definitely needs to be talked about."* (O1–O3 Male)

Perceived Improvements in Reducing Unwanted Gender-Related Behaviors

- **Participants indicated they have seen improvements in the way the DoD is working to address or prevent unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
 - *“I feel that [the Service] is going to keep progressing, I also feel that the training does help to kind of remind you because we do get bogged down in the day-to-day grind of work and sometimes you do forget those small things and so that training kind of reemphasizes the importance. I've personally seen a decrease in off-color jokes or because people are being more cautious about what they say or what they do.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“They get so much training on it [that] you can tell it's becoming more effective because of the fact that they're more aware of it.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think the fact that they're making an effort to figure out what the problem is and what can be done, if anything, to improve conditions. The military is not the only organization in the world that has a sexual assault problem, but you hear about the military as the only one that really seems to be pressing forward and trying to fix it.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“Colleges and [civilian organizations] [are] trying to adopt the same philosophies that the military have about sexual assault [given that the data suggest it is] lower compared to like the civilian world. That's what they're trying to do is adopt the same on the outside, basically like trying to adopt the same philosophies that the [Service] and military have about sexual assault.” (E3–E4 Male)*
 - *“We push for diversity. We have female leadership [throughout the chain of command]. They're doing a good job at it.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“The bystander intervention training. It's [about] taking care of each other and stepping in before something happens instead of [hearing], ‘Females, do not go by yourself.’ ‘Do not do this, do not wear this, do not be out there by yourself.’ Now, it doesn't matter what gender you are, it doesn't matter what you are, to look out for one another.” (E5–E6 Female)*

Chapter 6: Changes in SAPR Policy

The DoD continues to establish and revise policies to improve the treatment of sexual assault survivors. The past 12 years, in particular, have seen a number of new capabilities and resources for survivors of sexual assault.

In 2004, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) were created as a part of a cadre of trained first responders (other responders include chaplains, lawyers, and law enforcement; Under Secretary of Defense, 2004). In 2013, the Air Force was approved to implement a pilot program that assigned special counsel to victims who reported a sexual assault to assist them in navigating the legal process. The Secretary of Defense subsequently directed the Secretaries of the Military Departments to implement the Special Victims' Counsel/Victims' Legal Counsel (SVC/VLC)¹⁴ program in their respective Services given its promising results (Secretary of Defense, 2013). The SVC/VLC acts as legal counsel for the survivor, provides advocacy and support, and acts as the intermediary between the prosecutors and the survivor. In 2011, the Department enacted the capability of "expedited transfers" for survivors (Deputy Secretary of Defense, 2011). After a survivor makes an unrestricted report, he/she can request an expedited transfer to another base/installation or another duty assignment on the same base/installation. The request for a transfer can be made for a variety of reasons and commanders must provide survivors decisions on such requests within 72 hours of receipt. Commanders are also authorized to transfer the accused perpetrator instead of the victim to maintain good order and discipline in certain circumstances. In 2012, a new DoD policy mandated unrestricted reports of sexual assault be reviewed by a senior officer (an O6 or higher) possessing special court martial convening authority regarding initial disposition authority. This policy change was implemented to ensure that more experienced commanders objectively assess these cases.

This chapter examines members' awareness of these newly implemented resources, including the establishment of policies regarding the SVC/VLC and expedited transfers, as well as whether or not they believe these policies/support programs are utilized by and beneficial to survivors and leadership.

Understanding of Legal Resources

- **Some participants indicated they have heard about the creation of the SVC/VLC.**
 - *(Multiple affirmative responses.)* (E5–E6 Males)
 - *(Multiple affirmative responses.)* (O4–O5 Mixed)
 - *"I've heard of it. I do not know much about it."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *"I am familiar only because I knew someone who was in that position, but I do not recall it ever being publicized."* (O1–O3 Female)

¹⁴ All four Services have created specialized attorney positions for sexual assault survivors. The attorneys in the Air Force and Army are called Special Victims' Counsel (SVC), and Victims' Legal Counsel in the Navy and Marine Corps.

- “Yes.” (E1–E4 Female)
- “Yes.” (E7–E9 Male)
- **Other participants offered a mixed response on whether they have or have not heard of the SVC/VLC.**
 - “I knew it was in the process but I didn't know it was actually happening already.” (E5–E6 Female)
 - (Multiple mixed responses.) (E1–E4 Females)
 - “I hadn't heard about it.” (O4–O5 Male)
 - (Some yeses and some nos.) (E5–E6 Males)
 - (Multiple mixed responses.) (O1–O3 Females)
 - (Some no's and some head nods.) (E1–E4 Males)
- **Other participants indicated they have not heard about the creation of the SVC/VLC.**
 - “I haven't.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “It's the first time I've heard of it.” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “It's not ringing a bell.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “No.” (O1–O3 Male)
 - “I didn't know there was specifically somebody for that.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “No.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “No.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “I've never heard of it.” (E5–E6 Female)
- **Some participants indicated they found out about SVC/VLC from several different sources.**
 - “I heard about them all through tech school. I've heard about it a lot.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “From the SARC.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “Through a victim.” (O4–O5 Male)

- *“In the command channels, you get funneled all of this information because you have to know it. I do not know where it came from, but it was one of the many things I had to read.”* (O4–O5 Male)
- *“[As an] Care Readiness Empathetic.”* (E1–E4 Female)
- *“In my last unit, the victim was given legal counsel.”* (E5–E6 Male)
- *“I’ve worked with them.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- *“[At] my [prior] command, [my commander, he made sure that all of his [member] s came to do a tour of the facility and that’s how we were introduced to the different personnel who work here.”* (O1–O3 Female)
- *“[I learned] through the Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examiner Course (SAMFE).”* (O4–O5 Male)
- *“Because I was a witness in a case.”* (E5–E6 Male)
- *“[The] VA, SAPR, SARC, and VLC are now listed with the informational pamphlets that are passed out. And in general and all across every poster board and everything, VLCs are included now.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- **Other participants indicated they had learned about SVC/VLC through formal and informal training.**
 - *“In training.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“Class.”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“It’s one of those things in training that hey, this is another resource that’s available when you use unrestricted reporting.”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“I heard about it through the bystander intervention training [and] the command facilitator training. I heard about it through there because I had to put together a pamphlet with our VLC on it.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“Our SARC puts out training and then we all sit around a room and get trained on it.”* (E7–E9 Male)
 - *“I think it’s mentioned in general training.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“Command training.”* (E5–E6 Male)

- **Some participants indicated they were not certain about what the SVC/VLC program is/how it functions.**
 - *“I do not know how to tell somebody how it would work or anything like.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“I do not think a lot of [members] know. It hasn't been discussed very well.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“I've heard of them. To get in touch with them I would just assume that we come down here to the SAPR building and they would give us the information that we would need?”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“That's for victims that are military, not your victims that are civilian; correct?”* (O4–O5 Female)
 - *“Are these personnel at the installation or are they for the unit? I have no idea.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“Is this the old Victim and Witness Assistance Program (VWAP)?”* (E7–E9 Female)

Positive Perceptions of SVCs/VLCs

- **Some participants indicated they believe the SVC/VLC resource is valuable.**
 - *“Definitely. When that happens, they give you a lawyer that you work with. I feel that it's better if you have somebody that you do not work with that doesn't [know] you or the other person. [Someone] with a fresh mind and actually knows what's going on.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“The process is overwhelming once you go formal or unrestricted. When you are going through court proceeding, the victim will constantly [be] having to [tell] their tale over and over and get questioned and maybe hear the other side. They need somebody to turn to and say ‘Help me understand what just happened.’ So I think that's why those people are good.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“Absolutely.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“If I were a victim, I would definitely be reaching out for information, to find out what my options are [and] for guidance. I would definitely come across that resource and I would use it.”* (E3–E4 Male)
 - *“It definitely could be beneficial. They know the law and everything.”* (O4–O5 Male)

- **Some participants indicated they believe it would be beneficial for the survivor to know they have an advocate and that the advocate is a specially trained lawyer.**
 - *“They're going to know their options. I feel sometimes you do not know all of the options. You know how to report things, but you do not know the outcome. I think having the legal representative can kind of lay everything out for you and say ‘If you choose this option’ or ‘If you do this, this will be the outcome.’” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Lawyers specifically spend most of their time reading the books, knowing the law, knowing what rights and everything else. They can help you better.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“The SARC or Victims’ Advocates—they can't give legal advice. To be able to get legal advice and have somebody who's there with you when the defense or Office of Special Investigations (OSI) talks to you, can be very comforting. It is good for victims to know [the SVC/VLC] ‘has their backs’ and to know what their rights are as a victim.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I think it is because there can be such kind of a gray and muddy legal area. If you get whatever JAG happens to be assigned that case, they may not know that gray area very well. They may not have the experience to really do the due diligence, by no fault of their own, to really support that victim through the entire process and do it correctly.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“It is their sole job to know rules and regulations and what is right and what is wrong. I expect them to have the [right] information at any point because it's their job.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“I think with the specialized attorneys just for the sexual assault or sexual harassment victims, it helps out. It's just like if you have something wrong with your head, you're going to go to a neurosurgeon and not just to a regular doctor. They're specialized, they're trained, and they're up to date on all the laws and regulations. It helps them out a lot more than just going to the regular JAG officer.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“Having someone who's solely focused on you and this topic and getting you help, it's definitely beneficial. I feel like it would be very beneficial, because a lot of the SAPRs and victim advocates—these are collateral duties. They have their priorities—and collateral duties aren't your priorities.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“They're a legal expert. They can stop questioning if that [member] is feeling burdened with too many people asking too many questions. They can say ‘Stop, just talk to my legal counselor, I do not want to talk about this, I only want to talk to one person.’ Kind of gives them an outlet, per se.” (E7–E9 Male)*

Awareness of Expedited Transfer as an Option for Survivors

- **Some participants indicated they knew about the option for a sexual assault survivor who made an unrestricted report to request an expedited transfer.**
 - *(Multiple affirmative responses.)* (O4–O5 Mixed)
 - *“I do know about that.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *(Multiple affirmative responses.)* (E5–E6 Females)
 - *“Yes.”* (E1–E4 Male)
- **Some participants indicated they did not know about the option for a sexual assault survivor to request an expedited transfer.**
 - *“That one was news to me.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“No—I’ve never heard of it.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *(Multiple mixed responses.)* (E1–E4 Males)
 - *(Multiple mixed responses.)* (E3–E4 Males)

Perceptions of Expedited Transfer as an Option for Survivors

- **Some participants indicated they supported the expedited transfer option for survivors who made an unrestricted report.**
 - *“I think it’s good.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“I think it’s good.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“It’s a great option.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *(Some affirmative responses.)* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“I think it’s good.”* (E3–E4 Female)
- **Other participants indicated the expedited transfer option might offer survivors perceived benefits such as a fresh/new start, possible healing, and stress reduction.**
 - *“I think it gives the individual a little bit more power over a choice in life and what they need to do instead of feeling trapped and confined in one area without a place to grieve.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“It aids in healing.”* (E1–E4 Male)

- *“I think you could avoid the reprisal and ostracism; because if you do [transfer], especially if it happened in [your] unit. If you go to another base, you can kind of have a little bit of a clean slate. You're not reminded of what happened in the workplace or on base every time you go to work or every time you go by the dorms. If you are at a new base, at least it's a little bit easier on you.”* (O1–O3 Female)
- *“It's a great option—because you do not have to deal with [the accused] and you wouldn't have to deal with anybody telling you, ‘You were lying’ or ‘You do not have to run into that person.’”* (E1–E4 Female)
- *“One of the positives is that you get that victim away from the installation where it occurred, so they're not going to be victimized by the offender and by the social group. They get a clean slate, a new chain of command, and they can focus on their job and do what they have to do to move on with their lives.”* (E7–E9 Male)
- *“It gives you a different scenario, a different situation, a different way of life, different opportunities, and different people to meet. It creates opportunity for the individual.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- **A few participants indicated they have witnessed an expedited transfer as beneficial to the survivor.**
 - *“I've seen it twice. Once when I had someone sent from my unit and once when someone was sent to my unit. The whole anonymity to the program—a great way to move forward and a good resource in a tough time.”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“It's worked. She's a lot happier.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“Very positive [experience] for the victim. She was able to PCS to another installation. I think for everyone that was friends with her, we were all happy for her; she was able to recover.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- **Other participants indicated expedited transfers may present manning/resource issues to units in executing their missions.**
 - *“From a manning standpoint, you would lose manning. You are going to hear complaints about it, but at the same time we've still got that mission.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“If I'm the receiving unit, yes, I just filled a vacancy. I would be more concerned with the losing unit, especially if that individual is a critical piece to my team and I've just lost them. How do I manage that as a losing unit who doesn't have that specific MOS; I'm stuck for the next 17 months with nobody. That's a challenge. I think it's good for the victim; it might be difficult for the unit.”* (O4–O5 Female)
 - *“We're asking manpower officer [to be involved] so we can provide our insight as to where they're going to go, instead of just saying ‘They're going here.’”* (O1–O3 Male)

- *“The workload would shift to whoever is left. It would take time to get another person to fill that billet.” (E3–E4 Male)*
- *“It would be better if there was a way with the expedited transfer that we could get a replacement. In some cases, it does take a while for the cases to be resolved.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- *“That [member] could have specific training that is specific to his ship. In our case that happened, and we do not get a replacement for it, so we do not get a replacement for this person's training, so we just lost it.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- **Other participants indicated an expedited transfer might have potentially unforeseen negative repercussions for the survivor.**
 - *“We can't just be placed wherever in the medical group. If we are moved outside of our career field, it's looked at like ‘What did this person do.’ ‘What happened?’ We're automatically labeled because that's what we do. If you can't engage in patient care, you are moved. There's an automatic label.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“One negative I can potentially see is it would maybe raise some red flags as to why the individual was leaving for a certain period of time, especially for your evaluations. If you have a five month evaluation, that never looks good.’ Why did you not complete your full annual evaluation; what happened?’ It starts to potentially look bad on the [member]. (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“They can start back to doing their job and not have to deal with getting victimized; that's what it's for. But, that's not what it's for—that's the perception. When you move the victim it seems to the masses that the victim is the one being punished. Even though the victim requested it, because it's behind closed doors and the chain of command has accommodated the victim. We do not go back and regurgitate that information to the unit because it's none of their business. It looks like ‘If I go and report this, I'm going to be moved because when another member reported his incident, he was [transferred].’” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“It's bad—especially in a rating like ours. If you move early and go to a new command, it's really hard to go higher rank in our rate and that keeps you back another year or two. Why would you ask for that if your career is going to be on the line? It's not like they're moving them to punish them. [The member will] keep to themselves so they can keep their job.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I think it might be hard to explain that transfer down the line if you're up for Chief or you're an Officer and your promotion board is taking a look. How do you explain that? It may be already an unrestricted report, but unrestricted still doesn't mean you want your whole promotion board [knowing]. You do not want a Post-It note saying, ‘Here's why they were transferred.’” (O1–O3 Male)*

Awareness of the Expedited Transfer Option for Commanders to Move Accused Member

- **Some participants indicated they knew about the commander's option to transfer an accused member, including learning about the option through training.**
 - *"I heard someone bringing it up before."* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *"It was part of the training. I know when I first got to [the installation] that was part of the first big SAPR training they got."* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *"We had a SAPR class that [included] a video that stated that the perpetrator could be moved and/or transferred to a different [installation]."* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *"Trainings."* (E5–E6 Male)

Perceptions of the Expedited Transfer Option for Commanders to Move Accused Member

- **Some participants indicated the ability to transfer an accused member might be useful.**
 - *"Having the option and having the ability to exercise discretion is always important."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *"Absolutely."* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *"I think it can be."* (O1–O3 Female)
- **Some participants indicated they believed it would be beneficial for the accused member to be transferred instead of the survivor.**
 - *"The victim can get to stay within the squadron, so they're not the ones being punished, having to move to get away from the perpetrator. If the perpetrator is moved by the commander, even to work somewhere else, maybe [even] on base, at least the victim is not having to work next to [the accused]."* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *"I think it's great because every situation is so different that regardless of what happened, that victim has so many options to choose from."* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *"The victim can still be around people that they know and trust—and they [do not] have to change their whole life."* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *"When you move the accused, not necessarily the [victim], there may be some team cohesion you can preserve. It's easier to leave the victim with their support system and [remove] the accused until the investigation can process."* (O4–O5 Female)

- *“That's awesome.”* (E5–E6 Male)
- *I think it's good. I think it's a good option too. Because at the end of the day, that individual is still a human being, and [he] could possibly hurt himself or herself, so if there's too much pressure, you could avoid an even worse situation. So I think it's good.* (E1–E4 Male)
- *“I think it's better to move the offender vice the victim because it's a lot of hardship on the person already. [If you move them] into a new command, they've got to meet new people. They are going through a tough time in their life. They may have to move their family. There's just a lot that goes into it and they do not deserve that.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- **Other participants indicated both positive (e.g., keeping their skillset, staying within the unit) and negative (e.g., finding and/or waiting for a replacement, causing undue burden on the receiving unit) reactions to a commander's option to transfer the accused member.**
 - *“Any time you're giving the commander the option to move/transfer people to solve issues and giving them the tools in their tool box, it's nothing but good.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“If they're being put somewhere else, it can almost sound like ‘That's not my problem anymore.’ ‘It's his problem now.’”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“They would have to find a replacement for that person—whether it be a Sergeant or a Commander.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“They gave me a new [member] and he's not helping my team. [Nor is] he not helping me; he's pulling me down and I [had to] babysit him. I have to work overtime now.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“If it is a problem child, it is pawning the problem off on someone else. Let's send him to another unit; so, he/she can be troublesome there.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“We consider it, ‘Pushing off your problems.’”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“It's a useful tool.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“I think the [accused] should also have a say. What if the [assault] is unfounded or unsubstantiated? You just took someone from their support system, where they had a good work environment and career? And then it turns out it was all for naught. Then you also have a command that's gaining a member that's now under investigation [and they have] to babysit. I'm not going to dump that on another commander to deal with that individual.”* (O1–O3 Female)

- **Other participants indicated transferring an accused member might not be in keeping with the presumption of innocence.**
 - *“You’re not going to end up well. [When] you start PCSing people over accusations, you are [then] in dangerous water.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I think that’s unconstitutional.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I thought in our system we had the presumption of innocence. Why do we assume they’re guilty? If someone makes an allegation, why do not we fairly look at the allegation? Why do not we do a thorough investigation? What we are saying now is because an alleged victim is asking for the person to leave, [the accused], [is going to be] uprooted and sent away. Depending on whom you’re dealing with, if they have a little bit more rank that ends their career. It’s over. There’s no due process. It seems to be against the system of justice that we should have in the United States.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I think it goes against the legal process of being innocent until proven guilty. Right off the bat you’re assumed guilty, so you’re being moved. Now you have to uproot your life—whether you’re guilty or not.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I feel without any other details being presented, it gives everyone the idea he or she has done something wrong—even if that’s not true.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“The offender is being wrongly accused and has been plucked out of their support system and placed in a different command. You really be put that [member] at a disadvantage by removing from their support system.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“The CO and XO tried [not to] jump to conclusions that the accused actually did it. You could potentially move someone who was innocent and end their career because you shoved them onto a shore tour. No matter what, you run the risk of ending one to two careers just by moving them to a shore command.” (O1–O3 Female)*

Chapter 7: Prevention

Some sexual assaults and unwanted gender-related behaviors begin or occur in environments where people have an opportunity to step in to prevent sexual harassment and/or a potential sexual assault. These opportunities might exist in social settings and/or in the workplace. This chapter addresses bystander intervention,¹⁵ more specifically, how members perceive their roles with respect to preventing sexual harassment and/or sexual assault. Participants were asked to provide details about red flags¹⁶ or situations that could be construed as potentially vulnerable to sexual harassment and/or sexual assault. Participants were asked whether they would intervene if they saw one of those red flags. This chapter also includes information on what members might do to address inappropriate behaviors witnessed in social or workplace situations. Finally, participants were also asked to indicate at what point, if any, they would step in and address the issue if they witnessed inappropriate gender-related behaviors.

Perceived Red Flags

- **Some participants indicated excessive alcohol consumption in a social situation might be a risk factor or red flag that might lead to unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
 - *“Extreme alcohol use. That’s what I see when people start losing bearings and get to a point where they just lose total inhibition [and] something goes desperately wrong. [It’s] when you see it go from just a good time to they’re getting plastered.”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“I think high quantities of alcohol being consumed is a risk factor.”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“Getting blacked out drunk where you do not know what you’re doing, what you’re saying.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“Getting overly inebriated where you’re not sure what’s going on, you can’t take care of yourself, would put you in a situation where you could be harmed.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“Heavy drinking, according to the scenarios that have been thrown out [in training] and what we read, it’s heavy drinking.”* (O1–O3 Male)

¹⁵ Bystander intervention is used in training to raise awareness among Service members that they should step in if they see a situation that could potentially lead to sexual harassment and/or sexual assault.

¹⁶ Red flags are considered behaviors that could lead to/encourage behaviors permissive to sexual assault and/or sexual harassment and/or sexist behaviors.

- **Other participants indicated excessive alcohol might be used to subdue a victim (i.e., used as a weapon) and might be a risk factor or red flag that might lead to unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
 - “Someone is trying to feed [another person] drinks. [The other person is] not interested, but they're trying to ply you with more and more [drinks]. That opens the [person] up to a risky situation.” (O4–O5 Female)
 - “Somebody pouring drinks down somebody and getting them so drunk that their inhibitions are down.” (E7–E9 Male)
 - “If someone is feeding [someone] drinks, nothing good is going to happen.” (E1–E4 Female)
 - “Somebody is pressuring somebody to drink who doesn't really want to.” (E3–E4 Female)
- **Other participants indicated isolating an individual in a social setting might be perceived as a risk factor or a red flag leading to unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
 - “Trying to isolate one person, trying to pull someone away from the group slowly without anyone noticing, it prevents people from stepping in.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “They're trying to isolate, somebody that's trying to isolate themselves alone with an individual. It's like you see in the videos, it's the same scenarios. And in the barracks is usually when you see something like that too.” (E5–E6 Male)
 - “If you have one friend that's trying to get another friend away from the group or alone from the group, that could be a red flag.” (O1–O3 Female)
 - “Trying to isolate her from the group, like pull her away from her friends, get her one on one.” (E1–E4 Male)
 - “Trying to deter you away from a group if you came with a group. [E.g.], if you're with your girlfriends and there are guys dancing and then one of them tries to take you out to the dance floor and then leads you towards the back of the bar or something like that. I would say that isolation part would play into it.” (E5–E6 Female)
- **Some participants indicated it might be difficult to know whether one should intervene in a situation that might be risky.**
 - “I think part of it depends on the perception of whether or not it's wanted or unwanted because, you know, people have relations with each other so sometimes it's kind of hard to tell whether or not, you know, maybe that person is a potential victim. In a lot of cases, [people] will feel social pressure to not do things that make it look

- like they're rejecting the person that's coming onto them. It's tough to say.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- *“It's a gray area. I do not know.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“A lot of times even you mention the pouring of the drinks, those are two willing adults having a great time pouring drinks, it's not like one guy holding her hand and saying hey, take this. It's hard to step into that when you see them both laughing and having a great time and enjoying each other.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I think recognizing the signs are the hardest part. But after you've — if you've recognized that there is a problem or could be a problem, I think a lot of people would.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“The difficult thing is in that gray area, perceiving an assault. That is usually a couple of people standing around having a few drinks [too] many drinks, [and then] somebody starts flirting with someone else, the other person may be non-receptive, they go off on their own. That area is where a lot of people have difficulty. It's a hard social area of, again, working environment, social environment that they have in the barracks. That is where I think [members] have a difficult time stepping in, because those signs aren't always obvious.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“On the flip side if you just go out, if we just go out for a night, I do not know who those people are. You would hope that if you saw something really bad, like the grabbing, the touching, and the other person just looking like I'm scared, I think we would intervene. But if it's just a social conversation between two people, really not going to intervene.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - **Some participants indicated they believe military members might not be willing to step in and stop a risky situation or red flag.**
 - *“A lot of people are [think], ‘It's not my business.’” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I really do not think it's gotten that far yet. It's a culture that has to change and as of now I haven't seen that it has.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I give it a 20/80 ratio. 20 who would actually step in and 80 that would turn away and look away.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I wouldn't say a majority, I would say it would be more like a minority are the ones that are mature enough to try and squash that. Mindsets do not stray too far at that particular age group, they get some alcohol in them and they're all shifting to a one track mind.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“A lot of people would look at the situation, see what's happening, you know, do not want to get into something that maybe law enforcement needs to get into. I think some people would look at the situation before acting, whereas other people would just act on it and just jump in.” (O1–O3 Male)*

- *“Some of that, when you talk to people they'll tell you oh, yeah, I'd be willing to go ahead and step in and stop it. But then when faced with a situation, it actually takes courage to act. And some people do not necessarily have that. I personally do believe yes, I actually will, because honestly, I'm really not afraid of anybody, and as long as I can stop someone and it's within my power to do it, I will do whatever I can to actually stop assault.”* (E1–E4 Male)
- *“I would say they would notice, but they wouldn't have the courage to do anything about it because they do not want to be the one...[i.e.], the one that's intervened, because it's going to be, ‘Why did you ruin the fun; we were just playing.’ Then a lot of people can actually take that the wrong way too.”* (E5–E6 Male)
- *“I think it depends on the circumstances and how close you are to the people involved in that situation. If it's somebody that I'm comfortable with, that I work with, I'm friendly with, then yeah, I'd be more likely to step up because they're going to trust my judgment and I'm going to kind of know their personality and be able to see that there's a potential issue there, see a red flag, or whatever the case may be, as opposed to just two strangers.”* (O1–O3 Female)
- **Other participants indicated they believe leadership intervenes and encourages members to intervene if they see a risky situation or red flag.**
 - *“I know in our unit, our brigade commander made a big deal out of it because there was a [member] who stepped in at a bar and he took the female from the situation and told this guy, ‘I know what you are doing, it's not okay.’ I think they actually got in a bar fight over it. Because he did the right thing, the brigade commander didn't punish him. That was put out to all of the battalions and all of the companies down to the lowest level as an example* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“I think with the bystander training it's becoming more apparent that they should step in if they see something.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“Yes. Yes, it's taken pretty seriously in my unit. We have some civilians that have that old mindset, especially with the women in the squadron, so they'll say some inappropriate things at times. And leadership is really quick to jump on it and stop it right there. And not just leadership but a lot of co-workers who are on kind of the same level are ones that will turn them in or speak to them directly.”* (O1–O3 Female)
- **Other participants indicated members might be more likely to intervene if they see a friend rather than a stranger in a risky situation or if a friend was engaging in the inappropriate behavior.**
 - *“I think it would be easier to do it to a friend or somebody in your unit but to a stranger it would be a little harder because you do not want to get involved.”* (O1–O3 Female)

- *“If it's people I know I'd probably step in, but if it were strangers, I probably wouldn't.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“It's easy to keep a friend out of it, someone like close to you. But, kind of like what we were talking about before, if it's a stranger, then it's like a lot easier to be like oh, I do not know what's really going on, it's none of my business, I'm going to walk away.” (E1–E4 Male)*
- *“I'm not going jump in right away. But if it's one of my boys I'll grab him by the neck, I do not care if you know her or not, somebody else could call the cops on you, we are leaving this situation. I'm going to counsel him. If it's one of my friends, I'll counsel him right away, regardless if he knows the female or not. You're drunk; nothing good can come out of this if the cops get involved. I'm going to counsel them. If he's a stranger, I'm going to see how the situation plays out a little bit because I do not want to jump in and grab a female and she hits me upside the head, leave my man alone.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Other participants indicated the group dynamic (e.g., friends or colleagues versus strangers) might determine whether an individual intervenes in a risky situation.**
 - *“It depends on the situation as well. Because if it's a group of male [members] that go out and they're trying to hit on females, most likely they're egging on their buddy. I've been in groups where, you know, they'll be encouraging them, as opposed to saying ‘She doesn't want it; she's not interested.’ As opposed to say a female [member] goes out with a group of her friends, even if they're all male [members], if there's a male civilian, say, or even another [member] who's hitting on her and she says, ‘No,’ they'll step in and [say], ‘Back off.’ It depends on the situation.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think it really depends on the crowd that you hang out with. And then also like having each other's back, because they're the same way, where each other — like if they know one of their friends is too drunk and he's trying to hit on some girl and she's not having it, they're like we're going home, you know. And that's just their maturity level, because they're not going to let something like that happen, especially because it's not worth it, like doing something stupid is not worth it.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think it depends on the people. Some junior [members] are more afraid to step in when they know it's a senior [member] out in town. I think senior [Service members are in turn] scared to get involved with the junior [members] because they do not want to fraternize. I think with as much training, bystander training, that we've gotten, I think most people are more willing to step in than they used to be.” (E5–E6 Female)*

- **Some participants indicated they believe members might be perceived positively for intervening in risky situation and might encourage others to step-in as well.**
 - *“I think so. I’ve seen where people have intervened and [Service members think] he did the right thing.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“I think that stepping in is kind of like the awesome thing to do. Heroism is kind of in the spotlight right now. It’s kind of the cool thing to do.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“I think it’s changed. Anyone can intervene and you shouldn’t feel uncomfortable intervening [because] you’re just doing your part. It’s not even a military thing; it’s what a normal person should do.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“From ’06 to ’07 to now, sexual assault is obviously more of a hot topic. People are paying a lot more attention to it because it’s ‘Muscle memory.’ Now you’re able to see a problem before it starts. Before it wasn’t harped on as much; something could have happened, [but] by then it was too late; you didn’t have time to really respond [or] you didn’t know the situation. Now [members] are able to identify the situation and stop it a little bit earlier.”* (E5–E6 Male)
- **Some participants indicated they believe that Service members might be perceived negatively for intervening in a risky situation.**
 - *“Come on, man!’ ‘You were stepping on my game!’”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“A rat.”* (E7–E9 Male)
 - *“Depending on where they’re at in their lives, [members might think], ‘He’s like a cock block.’ ‘He’s a hater.’”* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *“Like an asshole. ‘Man, what are you doing?’ You’ve seen the videos and the SAPR training [when you see] the guy come to intervene and they’re like ‘What man—she digs me.’”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“You’re the bad guy.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“Biggest jerk in the world. If a guy were escorting a woman out of a bar and I like tried to step in, then he would probably puff up and like go into his whole male dominance thing. Or, vice versa, if a girl tried to stop something, [she] could like get really territorial.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- **Other participants indicated how a person will be perceived for intervening depends on the situation.**
 - *“It depends on the situation, whether they’re [perceived] positive or negative socially.”* (E5–E6 Male)

- *“They bought into that term, like the cock blocker. It depends on the situation. If it's a girl with her male [colleagues], maybe that guy is pissed off. They're looking at as, ‘We just helped her out.’ Whereas [with] the male [member] and one of them stepped in [to intervene], the response might be, ‘Are you serious?’” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“Good. If you have people that are all on-board with thinking the same way [then they will think], ‘It's a good thing that they separated them. I mean, it goes back to the maturity level. Because some people would be [say], ‘Why did you let that happen?’ If they're around people that are more mature about it, [they will hear], ‘I'm glad that you did that.’ The situation dictates all the time.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“I think it would depend on the different situations.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe training makes it more likely that members will intervene in risky situations.**
 - *“We've had training about the bystander intervention [with] vignettes on Fridays where we would give [members] [a] situation [to] act out. It kind of gave [members] like ‘I didn't even think about talking to a bouncer or a bartender instead.’ We were training the [members] [that] there are ways to intervene without identifying yourself as ‘That guy.’” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think those videos they did a few years ago, the ‘Intervene, Act, Motivate’ videos; [those] were very good. A lot of different scenarios that they kept showing where you can intervene.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“Yes. I think people are more willing to step in now than they were before this program existed.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“They give you the options of like ‘Direct, Distract, and Delegate’ as ways to intervene. Direct is obviously like ‘Alright, man, stop; she's not into you.’ Distracted would be like ‘I think your car is getting towed outside.’ I think it's useful for people because they might not — before they might not have known what to do in a situation, they would have been scared. When they give people examples of what to do, then they have these options to choose from based on the situation.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe a Service member would be likely to step in to stop inappropriate behavior in the workplace, and would be seen positively for intervening.**
 - *“I think peer to peer someone is more likely to step in and it would be received like ‘I'm going to lay off, so I do not get in trouble.’” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“Everyone is more likely to help your own shop because that's, like that's basically your family. You work with them every single day; we are all [like] brothers and sisters. You do not want to see anything happen to anybody, so you try to mediate,*

stop and just handle it before it has to go anywhere and before anyone does anything stupid that they would regret. The shop would see that as a positive because you're preventing drama, you're preventing something bad from happening.” (E1–E4 Male)

- *“I think you still would be perceived as doing the right thing and you would be praised for it.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“Depending on what's said and what's being done at the time, I think people are pretty quick to step in now. They're not going to let it continue.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- *“I would say the workplace it's probably a little bit easier place to make it happen than it would be outside of work, especially off base. In the workplace, it's really easy to stop [the behavior].” (E7–E9 Male)*

Chapter 8: Training

Training on sexual assault prevention and response (SAPR) is a topic of interest for the Department. This chapter provides information on when members first received their training as well as the frequency and the types of training they received. All participants were asked to describe the most effective and least effective training they received, whether they learned anything new in the past year's SAPR training, and what suggestions they had for improving future trainings.

Details about Training

Timeframe for When Training was Received

- **Some participants indicated they first received training on sexual assault when they entered their Service.**
 - *“I think I got it day one at basic training.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) in college.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“Basic training.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“I joined when everything in basic training started with sexual assault, within the Military Training Instructors (MTIs) in basic.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“Heck, at our commissioning source even back in the day it was touched on.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I’d say the recruiting station. There were situations with my applicants when I was on recruiting duty that were prevented because they were able to identify behaviors, whether it was an applicant or poolee.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“Officer development school.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“First, boot camp. They get it in boot camp. They get it again in A School, and then it would be on board during indoc they get it again. And then the annual or semi-annual training, depending on the situation. It’s constant. We’ll also do it again in check-ins.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe training on sexual assault has increased over the last few years.**
 - *“There’s always been a little bit, but there’s been a little bit more focus within the last two, two and a half years on this because it’s been an issue. I do not know if it’s necessarily a [Service] problem to do that because we can help educate them, but they come in with their own set of morals and ethics that, you know, we give them the rope, they can hang themselves.” (O4–O5 Male)*

- *“I was in basic almost 15 years ago. They didn't do that when I was in.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- *“It was when that video [The Invisible War] came out, the one with all of the females telling all of their stories, some were from the [Service] and from different various branches. That's the first time I can remember. So that was 2009, we got more drilled in because we were going to be dealing with that demographic.” (E7–E9 Male)*
- *“I came in almost 15 years ago and there was no formal training. I didn't even realize what the SAPR was in my first command or what they were there for. It was Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI) at that point. The only training that I got as a female going into my first deployment was they pulled all the females in and ‘Be careful, watch out for the guys, and do not get pregnant on deployment.’ “ (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“It's different now though. You get training. Every command you go to, every new command you go to you get training and then you get your yearly training.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“I think they're doing a better job of targeting the training as a little bit more targeted at each level it's going towards. Before it used to be pretty much the same training for everybody, now they're at least starting to train, to target towards the age groups training that it's very likely to apply to them.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe there is too much training on this topic, though the training they receive is valuable.**
 - *“I'm not saying it's not valuable, I'm just saying it's too much of it.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“They've got that graph out, it's a joke but it's a big pie graph and it says the amount of time I get trained being told not to rape people, the amount of time I get told not to kill myself, then something else, like not to drink. And the percentage I do my job, it's like this tiny little piece of the pie that you can barely see.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I do not know what the exact like training is but you have to get trained on it every so often, which it seems like it's almost like every three months or two months.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“My CO almost always speaks to alcohol, sexual assault and then motorcycle safety or something else like grilling on Labor Day or something like that. He always talks about alcohol and sexual assault.” (O4–O5 Female)*

Type of Recurring Training Received

- **Some participants indicated they recall receiving online training, in-person trainings, and PowerPoint presentations in large forums, which they did not feel was necessarily useful.**
 - *“It's a long class, big presentation and everything.” (E3–E4 Female)*
 - *“Classroom, online.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“More PowerPoint and they might have a speaker who talks about SAPR.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I would say it's a different type of training that overlaps on different subjects. Everybody has to do the annual PowerPoint so I'm sure we all do that but there's always other types of training that may impact, which is probably why it feels quarterly, there's just different types of words passed about this regularly.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“[The Step Up or Take a Stand training] was our new one. It's annually. PowerPoint, videos, discussion.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“We do it on [the computer]. You can click through the PowerPoints and you answer questions or whatever.” (E1–E4 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated the recurring training varied in terms of format.**
 - *“Small groups, vignettes, PowerPoints; it's once a quarter. And it's going to be something different once a quarter.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“We have the standard panel of all these different online training courses. Then you have your regular face to face ones [and/or] then the incident based one, where you get a sexual assault or a sexual harassment issue in the command, as a knee jerk reaction the command puts out more PowerPoints, more individual training. That's usually how it works in my experience.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“Combination [PowerPoint presentation and speakers].” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“It's always PowerPoint. I got forced to go to this class one time and it was actually a couple of people who talked about it. It was a mandatory. They picked my name and then I had to go to the class. It wasn't that bad though. I felt bad afterwards because the lady had went through so much and her husband's command, they didn't care because he was a good [member], so they didn't care about his personal life just because he was a good [member].” (E1–E4 Female)*

- **Some participants indicated “draw-down days” might be beneficial for focusing on sexual assault issues and prevention.**
 - *“I’m pretty sure the big trainings, we do normal trainings, like the last training you have with the SAPR was, we have half day sports and then half day full training. Like we have three, four, or five months and a big training and we just take that day. It’s a big event, helps people enjoy it.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“Then you have stand-down days, where we do not do work and we just focus on training.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Annual training and then safety stand-downs, they always throw it in there.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I think we had that [a stand-down] when it wasn’t working. SAPR, sexual assaults increased in number, even after we were having these trainings. I think it was this is a huge issue. And so [we] did a personalized SAPR stand-down. And it was all hands, across the board everyone needed this training in a week it came down, everyone needed to do it. No one likes to go to meetings for anything. So there’s no way you can get people psyched about going to SAPR meeting. Even if they think it’s a big deal.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated smaller training sessions, led by leaders who take the issue seriously, are the most useful in getting the information across. Some said it depends on the unit leadership, climate, and culture within the unit.**
 - *“Ten or 15 minutes talking about a vignette is more powerful in changing the culture than putting everybody to sleep in a big bedroom watching a PowerPoint.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“We have had some awesome training here. So that was more person to person, it wasn’t just PowerPoint, but it was also very interactive.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“When I had the training last year we had a big discussion and we went to court and had a case pretty much and we had to, as the jury, say the victim was guilty or not. But the scenario that we have in our unit, I felt like nobody really takes them seriously because it’s fake acting and everybody is like ‘Who acts like that.’ I do not think anybody takes it seriously.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“We have weekly training in our command, and SAPR related training is on there every second week. And so we receive it quite regularly. I think it’s more command based. Whoever your training Petty Officer is, whoever actually sets up the schedule for what you’re going to be training on certain days. I think it’s more leadership based.” (E3–E4 Male)*
 - *“It’s supposed to be quarterly. It’s supposed to be quarterly by regulation but if it happens, depends on the up tempo of your unit; it might get a training session going*

- on but out of your whole unit you might get 50 people out of 150 and then you have your onesie-twosies that actually go for the makeup training.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- *“I do not think we got synced on the different levels of who does what training. But there's one time over in the Carey Theater they brought in the guy from UCLA, two times, on that and his target audience was the college kids and that was phenomenal. It got uncomfortable for a lot of our ranking individuals but it was definitely right on target.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I think it depends on your command. If you're in a command with a ton of people I do not feel like you get as much training as small commands would of 40 people. You have your annual training that you have to do, but then the base would put on additional training, and it's an option for you to go if you want. But I think the [Service] is kind of already going in that direction where every command is going to have the same amount of training.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - **Other participants indicated the topic of sexual assault in training is often seen as a “check in the box.”**
 - *“I think for the training it's more of a check the box.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“Either it's something that the command is not as comfortable with discussing, or just isn't sure how to approach it, or feels out of touch with the different generations. But for the most part it kind of feels like it's just a check in the box.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I think it feels like it's checking a box. I mean it's better than what it was thirty years ago when I came in but it still has a long way to go.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I think it's important; it's just sometimes these classes and stuff. It's literally a check of the box, and people do not take it seriously because it's an instructor or a video just going through the same stuff that we did the year before and the year before that and the year before that.” (O1–O3 Male)*

Frequency of Training

- **Some participants indicated they received training on these topics frequently (i.e., formal and informal), though there was some variation even within the same Service.**
 - *“My previous unit it was monthly.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I think like I've had training at least every three to six months for my first year and a half. When you switch commands, they break it down into male and female [SAPR training] groups. I also got it in boot camp. [Then], as soon as I graduated boot camp, I got it at my next command. I've been to so many different schools, but every school I had to go to training. One of the first things they always do is SAPR training.” (E3–E4 Female)*

- *“It's a quarterly requirement. At least four touch points a year.”* (O4–O5 Male)
- *“Annually at least once a year. [And, during] safety stand-downs.”* (O4–O5 Male)
- *“You get [training] before you deploy and when you come back.”* (E7–E9 Female)
- **Some participants indicated they believe they receive too much training on these topics.**
 - *“Too much.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“Very much so. Way too much.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“This kind of addresses more the frequency of training but there's an equity exchange between programs and between members, there just is. You have to balance how much you train. So the answer can't always be more training because at some point I'm going to shut down, I'm not going to listen to you. Then you'll have something that's really important and nobody is going to listen.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“It gets to the point where it's I'm SAPR-ed out, I've got it. I didn't make it this far in my career because I'm doing this behavior. And I'm not downplaying the importance of the program, but going to five mandatory annual sessions is a little bit much.”* (E7–E9 Male)
 - *“It's a little over the top. We're saturated.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“I would take a lot away because it just becomes mundane and it becomes a check the box item that you've just got to go to and you sit for an hour. I do not like to say it, but the mundaneness makes it feel like a waste of time. So I think quarterly, maybe small group. Maybe that would be too much.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“When it comes up and it's that time again, everybody is just like it's beating a dead dog, you just sit there and everybody has to listen, but I think a lot of them are tuning it out, they start playing on their phones, because ‘Two months ago we just had this training.’ By doing to it so much, everybody just tunes it out at that point.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“If anything we're exhausted by training. The training is good. The programs are set up. But what happens is you lose your audience because you are doing too much of it. I got it; I understand why it's required, it's just that if we overkill it, it's going to lose the people.”* (O4–O5 Male)
- **Participants emphasized that the amount of continual training and discussions on SAPR may create a repetitive atmosphere which might affect members' receptivity to the training.**
 - *“The fact that you have SAPR training again, [it seems as though we're being told that we] haven't gotten enough SAPR [training] this year, so I have to have my fourth*

training session of the year. [Consequently], [the training] becomes a joke; [they're not] making fun of the subject matter; [rather], it's the fact that you have training again on the same subject again is what the joke is about." (E5–E6 Male)

- *"Whenever we're scheduled to have a SAPR class or any kind of sexual assault class, the general feeling towards that is 'Oh man, not again.' We realize that sexual assault is a serious topic, but the frequency that we are having these classes just has made it—made the class less significant."* (E1–E4 Male)
- *"People do not really understand the topic because it's beaten into us, rather than communicated in a more effective manner."* (O1–O3 Female)
- *"I think the over training insults [members'] intelligence. Yes, we have bad people. We have bad people in society; and, we have bad people in the military [too]. But, the ones that are out there doing the right thing, to hammer them all the time with training, they get it [and are] coming around. It was just like Don't Ask, Don't Tell—we accepted it and we moved forward."* (E7–E9 Male)

Who Conducts Training

- **Some participants indicated they received training from the SAPR representative or from members in their command.**
 - *"SAPR rep."* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *"The Victims' Advocates."* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *"Our staff NCO or they'll have one of the Sergeants come and talk to us at the shop."* (E1–E4 Female)

Improvements in Training

- **Some participants indicated they have not seen a great deal of changes in training over the past few years.**
 - *"It's always PowerPoint."* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *"I do not want to dis on the training or anything, but it's pretty repetitive every time you go in there. It's the same stuff. It's like [taking] the same class almost every time. So I do not really think any of them differ."* (E1–E4 Male)
 - *"Same videos, same everything."* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *"There have been little changes and differences, but for the most part it's the same. It's the same general big picture."* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *"It's the same. It's the same talk that they give everyone."* (E3–E4 Female)

- **Some participants indicated they believe training has improved because the SAPR program overall has improved, however, they emphasized continued variety to keep members engaged.**
 - *“I think it's getting there. About six, seven years ago, I remember I literally got a SAPR class that was on the way to training, and the Sergeant stood up and said ‘Do not sexually assault anybody.’ Now there's a lot more involvement from the VA. There's the junior [members] had that 'Step Up' video and everything. I think people are a lot more responsive to it. I think it's getting a lot better.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“It's evolved for many of us. When we first came in, we could say the training is different now than it was then. But so the Millennials or whatever you want to call them, they're a lot different than say when we came in. If there's a training, generally it's evolved, based on the generations that are coming in.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I guess it's like time goes by too. Instead of just lecturing the whole time, they want involvement, so they'll want everybody to be involved and give their opinion and participate in the actual training. So it went from lectures and PowerPoints to conversations and discussion groups, and what should be okay in a group. They want to know who they're working with and what type of environment. So it's a lot more participation involved basically.” (E3–E4 Female)*
 - *“I've heard many people comment to the quality of the training. It's much more realistic, like the videos for example. It's not just cheesy—It feels more real. I think the [members] are able to relate to that more.” (O4–O5 Female)*
 - *“[The bystander intervention training] was delivered. It had a little bit of humor to it to help bring you in. Rather than just looking at a PowerPoint, it encouraged discussions [and] got people involved and actually paying attention to it. I remember a lot more from that training one time than five or six SAPR PowerPoints.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I think it has to be more creative, which is important. We did a SAPR stand-down which didn't entail any of the annual training you're supposed to get, it was just supplemental, and they showed us the [Tea Consent] video. The [members] really responded to that. Then they showed another video where they have [offenders] giving their personal testimony. You do not realize they're a perpetrator in jail, because they start off as the victim, and then it finally brings it to light at the end. That was a really good video. I think the training is more in tune with the younger folks. It's more relatable.” (O4–O5 Male)*

Perspectives from Supervisors on Providing Guidance on How to Interact With a Survivor and Alleged Offender

- **Some participants indicated mixed responses on receiving training on how to respectfully handle a survivor coming to them for help.**
 - *“I think the best training that I get for being a leader is having gone through the MEO school. You understand more about what that program is. That way when things do come up you have a better idea. I think those schools are good for whether you are going to hold that collateral or not because it gives you a chance to understand what it is. And that five minute gloss over is not going to help you understand the system or the difference between everything.”* (E5–E6 Female)
 - *“You are taught where to take them”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“Do not treat them differently because you do not understand and know what happened. Do not spread rumors, because you do not know.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“If something does happen, do something to keep that [member] that went through it to keep your mind off of it, to keep them engaged in work so they're not thinking about it, which will probably lead to hurting themselves or something.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“Command-wide training [instructs members to], if this happens, just understand that person is dealing with something pretty serious. Not necessarily treat them differently, but you just have to be aware.”* (O1–O3 Male)

Discussion With Personnel on Interacting With and How to Treat a Survivor or Alleged Offender

- **Some senior participants indicated they discuss interactions with survivors or alleged offenders with their personnel.**
 - *“I think it comes down to knowing your members and knowing who you are working with, and then having enough of a rapport with them that they feel comfortable talking to you about things.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“It comes down to this. If you are married, do you have a brother or sister? Think about them and how you would feel if they were in that kind of situation [and] how would you want them to be treated or how would you want to be treated. Or, how would you want your wife or [whomever] to be treated. If it offends you, if you immediately get pissed off about something, you probably know it ain't right.”* (E7–E9 Male)

- *“A lot of units I’ve been in have small group discussions with that and that seems to work when it comes to getting people to talk about it and things like that better, more so than some of the other stuff.” (E7–E9 Male)*
- *“I tell them it’s a great program. I tell them they need to pay attention to it. I tell them this is a profession and that you’re a part of it, we need to take care of each other 24/7 until the day following your day of separation or the day following your date of retirement, this is what you bought in for, this is the bigger picture. This is why it’s different than working for IBM or Walmart or your local grocery store. So welcome to the team. You wear the two family names on the uniform, and you need to understand it.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- *“I think the biggest things we promote in our unit is the camaraderie portion of it, this is my brother, this is my sister, because we are a big family. So, put it in your family, your own personal family situation. Would you let this happen to your sister? Would you let this happen to your little brother, big brother, [or] whatever the case is? To help raise that awareness, that camaraderie within those units [or] sections, that’s going to make the reporting process more positive for the somebody stepping in or preventing in the future. I attribute it to some sort of family, to the family environment. Make it real.” (E7–E9 Female)*
- *“Just make sure they understand that if it happens, especially if they are out, they know how to report it, make sure that there’s all the options open to them. I think the big one too is even if you feel uncomfortable and you just do not want to say anything, go ahead and just get it out in the open so if that individual is doing something wrong, we need to stop it right now. Do not keep it to yourself or something like that, because some other people they might feel the same way, and that individual might bring it on several people. So if you feel uncomfortable, say something. Do not hold it in.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- **Some supervisory participants indicated they do not discuss these topics with their personnel.**
 - *“A lot of people aren’t even comfortable talking about sex, that includes officers who are not comfortable talking about sex—and, sexual assault would be even more awkward than that. There’s some officers who wouldn’t handle it the right way either, I do not think. There’s awkward people who can barely even talk about it and before they [do], they need to be trained on it.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I think leadership recognizes that we’re overwhelmed with all of this training so, I do not want to say they know better than to talk about it but I think they know they do not need to.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“For us if a case comes down, usually everyone in our office knows the general facts about it and people may be like oh, can you believe this or can you believe someone acted in this way or said this about it. And you divulge into I could see how that*

- could happen when you were in port call or whatnot. But yeah, outside of training it's not.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“Unless the training is being conducted, I do not really think it gets discussed outside of those parameters, really.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - **Some participants indicated they receive training on these situations, on where to send the survivor, and, how to handle media.**
 - *“They touch on it. They just basically say ‘Treat them normally; do not bring it up.’ And a lot of times you do not know [if] that person is an accused or [a] victim. If they do tell you in the training, do not treat them any differently, just treat them the same.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“Yes [received training]. The person that is reporting, you shouldn't at all blame them so to speak. You really do not blame them. And this situation in general, me personally I feel like you get the legal thing, you let them deal with it. You just really let the legal part do their part on it and you just support.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“We get the ‘Do not talk to the media.’” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“There is the supervisor training which hits on it and then a lot of it comes from the training itself where they're like hey, if somebody comes to you, you need to stop because if they say too much then it will prevent them from doing a restricted report. So you should be careful. And there are some scenarios out there where they try to get people in there where some people do not know.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I think it does a little bit. But you're never prepared for that situation until you actually deal with somebody that's dealing with it.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“Absolutely, because they say the first thing you're supposed to say is to listen to them and tell them that you do believe them and ask how you can help [them].” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“For me, I was told do not try to take sides; just treat them as you always do. I actually like to know what the situation is before I try to judge or pass some judgment onto somebody, because I'm not perfect and nobody is perfect. I want to take a step back and actually see what happened in the situation and let the facts present themselves.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“The [SAPR] toolkit is awesome, by the way. I hope it never happens to me, but if something happens, I can grab that book and start going through it.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“Yes. They give you different situations, and they tell you how to go about it. They also ask, ‘What would you do if this situation?’ [It] could be your friend, someone else, a guy. That's pretty much it. Try to answer what would you really do if this was a real situation. I know we can ask questions all day and stuff, but when it's really*

happening, the situation changes how I look at it and everything, the different perception.” (E3–E4 Female)

- *“The Commanding Officer at the time had an all hands call and basically said that, without naming any names, that there was an assault and we would be going through training, and if we knew the offender or the alleged offender or victim, that we weren't to treat them any different and just try and just be supportive to both of them and their family.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated they are not trained on how to handle a case becoming public, or do not know because they have never seen a case.**
 - *(Multiple negative responses.) (E1–E4 Females)*
 - *“No. [Not trained on how to handle that situation]” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I'd say we're educated to know who can offer them the correct form of help. We know all the resources; we are given that training. As far as training ourselves to be able to give them counseling or things like that, that's not something that we receive.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I do not recall getting any.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I never received training.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“Not really.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“You do not see it across the [Service]. Unless they're a Victims' Advocate or a SARC, someone who's actually voluntarily with the program, you do not see it. This year's training seems to be chipping down at that iceberg as far as trying to get towards eventually training people in it. It's like the tip of the iceberg, but it's coming to fruition.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I haven't personally seen that.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I think maybe, this is bad to say it, but maybe because the reason why we do not get it is because we haven't been a victim, so now we're not being informed of all these things that are relevant to us, like hey, you need to be able to protect yourself. I do not know if the VAs get this kind of training to teach the survivors that hey, you need to be prepared, but at our levels we're not informed on that. Because they did come up with the victims' protection program or something like, but I haven't received anything.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“Besides delineating between restricted and unrestricted, I do not think so. We know that if we are not either a VA or a chaplain or something that we have to report to the chain of command.” (O1–O3 Male)*

- *“In general, you get told, ‘Do not talk about it because it's something ongoing and you weren't there so you need to keep chatter to a minimum so what needs to get done can get done.’ We're in a glorified high school; everyone continues to gossip and everyone thinks that they know a little bit more than the person before. It just goes around and two sides to every story and people take sides and it goes from there.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- *“I do not think there's any real formal training for it, but I think it's understood that you should not be obnoxious, you just generally be respectful towards the situation. You do not need to talk about it all the time. Only when it's like you need to talk about it. If you do not need to talk about it, you shouldn't talk about it really.”* (E3–E4 Male)
- *“I do not think it's really talked about.”* (O1–O3 Male)

Most Effective Training

- **Some participants indicated the most effective trainings are those that are relevant to their lives.**
 - *“I think the most effective training is when it's personalized in some respect, whether it be a vignette, small group discussion or whatever, but it's ‘This could be your sister, this could be your brother, this could be your mother.’ Relating the training to that and putting people in and sharing personal stories it becomes very personalized I think the message gets out and that is probably more dynamic for a culture change. So whatever the training is, as long as that aspect is in it.”* (O4–O5 Male)
 - *“The straightforward approach is probably best. I know in our SAPR class it covers all the needed topics of discussion, and our instructors are normal people who teach it in a very down to earth fashion, so, instead of the death by PowerPoint sort of way.”* (E1–E4 Female)
 - *“The last training we did here was probably the best one I have had, because it didn't talk about the creepy guy in the dorm who was sneaking in and assaulting women. It was the dude who playing around, whatever the instance was, he got intoxicated with some buddies and they took advantage of him. None of us feel like I'm going to go out and assault somebody this weekend. But putting us in the victim's seat, it makes it a little bit more personal. I think we have done better at that, versus a blanket statement of men rape women. Because men automatically get defensive, ‘I do not do that.’ But the case studies have done a better job of touching everyone and bringing it home.”* (O1–O3 Male)
 - *“I think one thing that could be done—I noticed in the last training that I had there was a lot more videos of personal experiences. I think if a personal was comfortable and willing enough to talk about it with a group of people saying, ‘This is my experience.’ It's going to make people uncomfortable, but it's kind of the point. You*

- want them to be uncomfortable because they need to know how wrong it is. Because some people take it like a joke.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“Without saying people’s names, they can give you instances of when people have gotten in trouble for sexual assault. You never hear any stories or situations that some Chief or someone had a case where he committed sexual assault and then like he was [in] 19 years and right before he was going to retire him, they kick him out. If you hear about situations in which people had consequences for their actions that would help.” (E3–E4 Male)*
 - *“There was an hour and a half long documentary on this one specific domestic violence, an assault case. Because it was real, people were looking at it, were paying attention, which is a better way to do it for everybody instead of a lecture. It helped to have a real life case, some type of video, some type of case study where a real life thing happened, and it had all the effects, and we were able to watch it and see how everyone reacted to it.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“Has to be humanized. If it gets rushed it becomes a thing to do instead of an issue we’ve got to deal with.” (O4–O5 Male)*
- **Participants often indicated they believe small group training is most effective.**
 - *“I think [small groups] make it a much more relaxed atmosphere, the [members] are actually engaged, talk. Information exchange as opposed to one side information, a mass PowerPoint presentation. Typically done at the team or squad level.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“For me, the best training experience [was when] we just sat around and we talked about how, as immersing leaders, we could make this a better program, how we could actually change things. I think that should be more common place as opposed to the standard PowerPoint that they e-mail out. It was a mixed group; it was mostly officers, but also some enlisted and both genders.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“The smaller the group, the better the group; the better you can teach them, the better you can educate them. That’s how you’ve got to look at it. The bigger the group, the less they get out of it. When you send your whole battalion it’s not going to happen. I’m not going to be able to look at 177 [members] to see if they understand.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“I like small, better. More intimate, better conversations [versus] a large mass briefing that not everyone wants to talk in front of the entire 13,000 people that are on base. You get down to your work centers, you know the people you are talking to. I think it’s better managed. If you are a Victims’ Advocates, you can lead the training. It’s easier to manage. You do not miss a question. If they have a question you definitely have time to ask it.” (E5–E6 Male)*

- *“I think the small [group] discussion affected us because people that we worked with actually stood up and said ‘I’m a victim.’ It’s really weird seeing somebody and thinking that could never happen to them; they’re so responsible or they’re such a big person with such a nice big personality [that] you wouldn’t think anything bad would happen to them. It’s surprising who could be a victim.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“Our office did a focus group. We talked about separate situations and what we should do and what we shouldn’t do. I think that’s been the most effective that I’ve done. I feel like I’ve paid attention more to that or wanted to be in the conversation, because I was hearing other people’s opinions and the viewpoints.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“Whenever I was overseas, [the small group] was more effective because people shared their personal stories. We got really in-depth because of the fact that the group was so small, and we all worked with each other, so it was a really comfortable environment and people were talking more openly about it. If we were in a theater, nobody is going to want to say ‘By the way, this happened to me.’” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“Small groups. It’s got to be focused. It’s got to be short and it’s to be in smaller groups, and so we can talk about it—and, not be bombarded every 90 days with three hours of SAPR training.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Other participants indicated they believe interactive training is most effective.**
 - *“The first Friday of every month we do some kind of SAPR training on the broad aspects of it, and there’s this specific video I will never forget called Tea Consent. If any of you do SAPR training, it’s hilarious. It pinpoints exactly what we speak of without being direct about it, [i.e.], boring PowerPoint presentations and all that jazz. It [incorporates] social [media] using YouTube. That was something that influenced me pretty significantly.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“[The training was] like Jeopardy [where] you pick a topic and flip over the card and tell what answer. It was very interactive and people learned a lot actually. It challenged what you actually knew, got people to talk about it and answer the question [to] see what you actually know and what you didn’t know.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“It was a two part [training that] the SAPR [program] put on. It was [an] all day stand down. I think that was one of the best trainings because it wasn’t the standard agenda; it was actual interactions of the members. [They demonstrated] the bar scenes, the social scenes. They [even] showed the male on male [interactions]. They showed the senior female approaching a junior enlisted [member], the older cougar type of situation. It’s usually male with the female, but they reversed it because it happens. They put it all in these skits and recorded it. The members [said] that was the best training they received because it wasn’t a PowerPoint; it was something that was real that they see.” (E5–E6 Female)*

- *“The interactive online training where you put yourself in the shoes of the person and you say what you do next. That was very effective for me.” (E7–E9 Female)*
- *“[There was] a facilitator and a video, and the video had scenarios. [The facilitator] stopped [the video] and then asked the group, ‘How would you handle it?’ It was a lot better. I haven’t seen training like it ever. It was awesome. It actually did teach them.” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“I like the soap opera trainings; e.g., [the] videos, anything that people can watch, relate to, [and] that add a little bit of drama almost to capture their audience. It’s really difficult with this generation of young members to really keep their attention for a long period of time. I do think the bystander intervention training was a really great example of that, because it showed real scenarios out in town, out at parties, on the ship where you might experience this stuff.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“One thing that I know my command did this year was bystander intervention. I think really it was a great conversation about sexual harassment, sexual assault on just various situations that any Service member could find themselves in that would potentially put their [co-worker] in danger.” (O1–O3 Female)*
- *“I think bystander intervention training is phenomenal. That’s a success for the military. I think it teaches not only our young members, but even old guys and gals that have been around for a while, ‘Do not turn that eye.’ ‘It’s okay to step in.’” (E7–E9 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe guest speakers, including survivors and offenders, and theater groups, using skits to portray real-life, are effective.**
 - *“I like [guest] speakers because you [listen to] actual experiences. If you actually tell you what happened to them, [and] if you have a heart, then you would feel remorse for them [and] not want this to happen to somebody else. ‘[I’m] going to help them out.’” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“[The guest speaker], Jeffrey Bucholtz, talks about sexual assault, sexual harassment; and, he catches your attention [and] makes it interesting, the class.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“Earlier this year, there was a really great speaker. His point was to [help us] get a picture of what assault [and unwanted gender-related behaviors]. He even played some songs that are popular and [he noted that], ‘This [music] reinforces the culture that we have.’ That’s the best speaker and the best experience I’ve had in terms of training.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I would say the best training that I received is training by subject matter experts. Every time I’ve had training by a subject matter expert in any topic, whether it is financial management or SAPR or anything else, I usually come out having learned one new thing.” (O1–O3 Male)*

- *“The most effective training was an event where there were professional actors and they came and did skits. To see it live in a live setting with actual people, instead of just the video, I know helped me. To be able to hear someone's story is a lot more effective than a PowerPoint.”* (E5–E6 Female)
- *“I do like the idea of bringing people actually up on stage and telling their story, that's probably what will hit it home with most people, seeing their peers up there going through what we think is BS. So if you see a face with that instead of a corny video, I think if you see people that are actually at that base, whether it is a story or real, everybody perceives it as it happened.”* (E7–E9 Male)
- *“They had this guy come share his story with us, and then he shared how he [made a] restricted [report that] became unrestricted, and the blow back he [experienced] from the squadron. When someone is speaking to you about their experiences in a more interactive class, then it's better. You actually have people in there crying—[even] men crying.”* (E1–E4 Female)
- *“I think the things that [members] respond to more is [videos that include] the [members] that are actually in the brig now or are out of the [Service] that committed some form of sexual assault. The [members] are going to respond to that because everybody says ‘That's just not going to happen to me.’ But, these people felt the same exact way.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- *“They brought in some sexual assault victims and they gave their stories. [It] resonated [because] it was very personal.”* (O1–O3 Male)
- **Some participants indicated specific trainings and awareness campaigns, such as Tea Consent, No Zebras, No Excuses, are effective trainings.**
 - *“People like that one [Can I Kiss You]. It's funny; it clicks really well. I know that was my favorite one. It wasn't base wide but it was more focused on the brand new [members] coming out of basic.”* (O1–O3 Female)
 - *“I haven't seen that [Zebra training] in years. I feel that was probably one [with] the most interaction with the [members]. They tell jokes. They use different scenarios and stuff. I've been in years now and that's the best training I've gotten so far on that subject.”* (E5–E6 Male)
 - *“[The] No Zebras [training]; that was well received, especially at my last command.”* (E7–E9 Female)
 - *“The first Friday of every month we do some kind of SHARP training and there's this specific video I will never forget called Tea Consent. That [video] influenced me pretty significantly.”* (O1–O3 Male)

- *“Last month, we watched the Tea Consent video and [it] made sense. You're not going to make somebody drink tea, shove tea down somebody's throat—why would you make somebody have sex with you?” (E5–E6 Female)*
- *“I like the Keep It In The Green campaign that just came out. It shed a different light on something that this room knew. I liked that. And I like the breakouts, it was interesting.” (E7–E9 Male)*
- *“The ‘Step Up, Take a Stand;’ the actual interactive training events, those have been highly effective in conveying information.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe training that involves the chain of command is effective.**
 - *“I think it was the one where our brigade commander pulled all the one officers, and then all the NCOs, and then all the officers and he did the training, he conducted the training with the civilian survivors’ advocate for that group. Because it showed that, A, he puts an emphasis on it and he cares about it but then as a brigade commander has a directed audience. I'm not going to fall asleep in training with a brigade commander standing right there. And it definitely put his priorities out there. And he had the subject matter experts, had CID, who's the group that's responsible for our brigade, they did the training and they offered some of their experiences and insight as well.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I know one thing; it started as one of my NCOs joking around. We got a big stack of those SAPR cards and he walks around and when there's an incident he starts handing out the cards. ‘You've got to be the change, so next time you see somebody, you get to pass the card off.’ It's gotten where it's been a competition, [i.e.], who can get rid of the card fastest. I think it's something that's a little more fun because I know if we had any more classes, none of my guys are paying attention. We try to do the break out groups, [but] nobody cares, nobody. [The cards have been] turned into something fun and guys are actually talking about it. I think it adds a little more interpersonal [dynamic], rather than, ‘Here's another class to go to.’” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I think it comes too often. I think we try to cram a lot of stuff in in one year. Between SAPR, it's a lot. Then too, you want the commanders to give it. Maybe you need your first line supervisors to buy off on it, because I can talk to ten people, but they're not going to buy into it if all the commander is doing is just filling in a block.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe adding variety to training makes it effective.**
 - *“I think in order for training to be effective you need to add variety. Because when you keep showing the [members] the same PowerPoint presentation, this is what restricted is, this is what unrestricted is, I've seen that presentation every single SAPR*

- [training], at least at the battalion level, so it's always this is what this is, this is what this is. As soon as you switch it up and they see primarily the consequences of what could happen to you if you commit something like this, I think that raises a little sensor in their brain and they're able to focus more on that.” (O1–O3 Male)*
- *“Tiers of training; this is what the basics of the SAPR program are, these are the consequences, this is what some of the cases have been. Tier level. Everything we do is crawl, walk, run. I think the SAPR program needs to take that tone, where first you learn how to crawl and then what walking looks like and this is what the running looks like. We're stuck at the bottom; we're stuck at what restricted and unrestricted is.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“Pedagogy in the [Service]—in general—sucks. But, when we use things like these types of teaching techniques and be creative, it's powerful.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“To give them the same cookie cutter briefing five, six times in a row, that is not going to be very effective. There does need to be something a little bit more complex for diverse groups and a different demographic, for each different demographic that may be out there. That's what I meant by a little more complex, the whole everything, not necessarily each briefing. The packaging needs to be very complex and diverse.” (E7–E9 Male)*
 - *“There should be some differences in frequency and differences in standard of training and whatnot. Right now, it's a ‘One size fits all training.’ It's the same [training] for myself who has 23 years of service [as] someone who's been in for 21 days.” (O4–O5 Male)*
 - *“I think it's the variety. Not just going to the regular classroom all the time.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe SAPR-run trainings are effective.**
 - *“There was one at the Family Readiness Center that the SARC did. Her personality, the candidness of it, and getting people engaged. She didn't let you just sit there; she made you participate. [She] gave very detailed examples and asked your opinion.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“[The SARC] puts a realistic spin on it.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I like the small group SAPR [training]. I liked that part [of the training which] focused on male sexual assault; a lot of times we focus on women. With men being a large proportion of the military, it was nice to [hear] that ‘We understand that you could be sexually assaulted too.’” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“If you are there and you are doing it because it's your duty to give that training and it's very somber and very putting you to sleep for the training, it shows and everybody feels it. I notice if an educator who puts a lot of energy into what they are saying.*

You can tell that they are really passionate about what they are saying and they put current information on what's going on in there. That's when it's really good training and you're going to get a better participation and better results.” (E1–E4 Male)

- *“I just think that whoever gives the training, they need to be engaged. And whoever is looking has to actually believe this is actually important, this person actually does care about this, and they're not reading off of a piece of paper. I have had one Victims’ Advocate who was super awesome, and actually everyone did get into it and I think was actually affected by it, and so it changed the tone of the trainings. The trainings weren't so much about putting a check in the box as they were actually experiencing through what he's telling us. I think it's who gives the training [that] is the most important part—more than the content of the actual training itself.” (O1–O3 Male)*

Least Effective Training

- **Some participants indicated that large lectures, especially early in the morning, are not effective.**
 - *“I think it would be more effective [if they] are at 0900. Or, have two different ones. People's mindsets are different. When people come in on their day off and have training for seven hours, it's just a mentality, you're automatically upset and you're shut down and joining in, you're not focused. I think it's because people are coming in on their day off.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“That's going to take going to the theater for three hours. We are going to be there for a while. It's seen as we are going to be at work later because we're not working. For every squadron I've been in when we have our maintenance days when we're not flying we are supposed to catch up on maintenance. But we're not doing maintenance, we're going to the theater and doing safety stand downs. It's like our punishment.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“I wish the [Service] could say that this was available for you, instead of conducting our annual trainings where we just check people off the list.” (O1–O3 Female)*

Opportunities to Improve Training

- **Some participants indicated training might never be effective in changing members’ deeply held personal biases or beliefs about sexual assault.**
 - *“I do not think it's about the policy or the training, I do not think that's the problem. And when you have people backing that behavior, if you create that environment and culture, you're going to have it. So it's not the policy. People know right from wrong, we were born with that instinct. It's there.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think it's the culture and the climate. You were integrating a new [Service] with people that have been in the [Service] where it was acceptable in the culture and*

- climate to be this way and now of course there's so many more females in. I'm not saying that makes it right, I'm just saying to change the thought process of somebody that has been in that culture for 10, 15 years and now all of a sudden they have to change things up and some people are just not really willing to change. Change is a hard thing.” (E1–E4 Female)*
- *“I feel by this age you should know that rape is wrong. You shouldn't have to get taught at 19, 20 years old that maybe you shouldn't do something to someone if they do not want it. You can't really teach someone if they're already in that mind-set. You can't sit there and give them classes on how not to rape somebody if that's the person that they already are from their past, or if they just really have something wrong with them and do not know right from wrong.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I think that in the sexual assault realm that we need to have a ‘Check yourself approach.’ I like to talk to [members] about their behaviors. I think that sometimes in the sexual assault world the potential offender does not know that what they're doing is wrong because their behavior has never been corrected. I think a lot of these sexual assault offenders probably wouldn't happen—because I think they think that [their] behavior is condoned, because no one has ever checked them on it. I think that if you're going to the behaviors of oh, maybe I need to check what I'm doing, maybe what I'm doing as a potential offender is not right.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I've seen some really cool things online about programs and projects that people have done with like virtual reality or people having family members being catcalled on the street and watching it on video and seeing the person's reaction. Maybe sharing some of those kind of projects or stories for future SAPR trainings might help people relate to it a little bit more.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I think it kind of just boils down to what's right and what's wrong, your moral compass and your values. Before this training, I know that there's a standard they're trying to preach, but my morals are already aligned to the standard” (E7–E9 Male)*
- **Some participants recommended incorporating more “data” and scenarios into training.**
 - *“Maybe more statistics on it. I asked some questions about the VA report, about what they're doing with all this research on females and putting them in grunt units and stuff like that. I asked, ‘Has there been statistics of sexual assault going up or things like that?’ And she told me, ‘She doesn't know.’ Maybe put something in there so we can see the actual numbers, this is happening more, and then maybe one in however many [are sexual assault survivors].” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“You would take it more seriously if you make it serious, like hey, this is real. Somebody that you know just got kicked out for something like this, it makes it more real. So it's like oh, damn, this is real.” (E1–E4 Male)*

- *“It's not just definitions; it's what's actually happening out there. You know what's actually happening. They seem to get a little bit more what you're talking about, what's actually going on. [Members] love to hear about [and are] actually genuinely interested in what is going on if you start talking about [real scenarios].” (E7–E9 Male)*
- *“As far as content, maybe not have the dark, drastic, maybe have something very light that it's still a real world example, but it's something that you might actually see on a normal basis that nobody really says anything about. And it might be acceptable but when you're portraying it in that video it's another way of saying it's not okay. So even smaller things that people might see on an everyday basis that isn't okay, but everyone thinks is okay, you see it and you realize it's not okay. But it's not like the ‘That won't ever happen to me.’ It's something like ‘I see this every day and it's not okay.’ So far as content, maybe do not focus on absolute worst scenario, because that's not even one percent of the actual scenarios that happen.” (E5–E6 Male)*
- **Some participants indicated they believe it is important to select the right person to perform the training.**
 - *“Some of the training I think would be more valuable if it was provided by the right person. Sometimes people are just told hey, you are going to be the SAPR person and then they have to do this training and they have no desire or care to do the training, and that comes across and it ends up being a bad training. I think the more trained the trainers are, the better the presentation would be.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think the quality of the training and the trainers need to be improved.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“The emphasis does need to be put more on the ‘No means no.’ Even if she's saying no, it means come back at a later date? Or, maybe they're slightly drunk [and] just give her a few more drinks. We need to put more of an emphasis on the fact that no really does mean no. Even if it's a small no, even if she is uncertain about it, just back off because there will be others.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“You can't just have anybody giving the training, it has to be somebody that really cares, and whether that's a leader or somebody within the command. So often then you do get those people that just start flipping through the slides, even though that's not the intent.” (O4–O5 Female)*
- **Some participants recommended training in smaller groups.**
 - *“I think if all of the SAPR training was in focus groups like this, instead of being in the auditorium with people falling asleep and texting, it would be way more beneficial.” (E1–E4 Female)*

- *“Do it in smaller groups. I'd say do it in smaller groups like this. If you do it in bigger groups, it's just everything gets lost with so many people. Half the people are falling asleep, half are not even listening.” (E1–E4 Male)*
- *“There's going to be certain people that will stand up and talk, and there's going to be like junior [members], PFCs, Lance Corporals, that sit back and do not say [anything] because they do not want to get up in front of the whole squadron and say something because they think they're going to get made fun of if they say something. If it's smaller groups, it helps and gets them actually engaged into the discussion.” (E1–E4 Male)*
- *“If you have the [small] group of seniors and then you make an all rank [group] with a senior [to] hear what the junior is thinking or what they're seeing, it enlightens you to the different things that you might not have thought about.” (E7–E9 Female)*
- *“I strongly agree that there should be small groups of women especially, but also young men, because maybe somehow an older staff NCO or a Sergeant talking to them individually would change their mindset about what they're thinking about women.” (E5–E6 Female)*

Chapter 9: **General Observations and Suggestions for Addressing Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

Throughout the focus group sessions, participants provided general observations and suggestions on topics related to, but not included in, the focus group protocol to address sexual assault prevention and response. Participants described their perspectives on a number of topics such as, being prepared to handle gender issues and observations on sexual assault in the military versus civilian life. This chapter summarizes those additional comments.

Suggestions to Better Prepare Members for Dealing With Gender Issues upon Entering the Service

- **Some participants indicated they wish they had known more about gender issues before joining.**
 - *“How prevalent it is, unfortunately. It's hard for many people in general to like draw a line between this is professional and this is social and then you live together, you work together, you do everything together but yet, you know, there's like this defined line. Always be on guard. At least for me, you just can't really truly trust somebody even though that's what you're supposed to do with your battle buddies.” (E1–E4 Female)*
 - *“I wish somebody would have told me that the rate was hot, because before joining the [Service] you have this image, this idea of what the [Service] is, of what [members] are like. The first word that would come to my mind was ‘Honor’ or something motivating like that. Then you come in the [Service], you hit the fleet and there's a lot of [expletive]. You're obviously taught to adapt in order and overcome.” (E5–E6 Male)*
 - *“That you do not have to take it. You do not have to put up with it. I've been in for 11 years and when I came in there was never any mention and now I know it's completely different. I wasn't aware of all of the rules and options; but, I know that's changed.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I think a lot of people that come in the [Service], both male and female, are very surprised at the amount of attention that they get from their peers when they come in or even their leadership. A lot of young men and women coming in have never had that much attention [of] a sexual nature. They might have been the odd one out back in their hometown. They are in, they're on two legs, [and] they are available. A lot of people aren't used to receiving that [attention].” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“I would probably put in more of the perpetrator so that way people know what the consequences are. If you perform this or if you get put in this situation, this is the consequence, this is what is going to happen to your career. That will probably change the entire aspect. Every bit of it is important. For those of us who have been*

in for 15 years, they had no informal training. Theirs was do not go get pregnant—that was their training.” (E5–E6 Female)

- **Some participants indicated there was nothing additional they wish they had known prior to entering the military with respect to dealing with gender issues.**
 - *“I think the [Service] is pretty open about it when you come in. They're not trying to hide anything where they say hey, if you come on a ship there's absolutely zero chance of you being the victim of any of these crimes because we all work together. So I think they're kind of realistic about it.” (O1–O3 Male)*
 - *“I think they do a pretty effective job, but it's just like laying it all out there in an effective way.” (E3–E4 Male)*
 - *“I do not think it's really anything you can kind of prepare for. I do not think there would be anything anyone could have really told me when I've had a [member] come up and tell me she was raped and another one tell me she's been assaulted. You really can't prepare for something like that when someone comes up to you—no matter how many classes or trainings you take.” (O1–O3 Female)*

Observations on Perceived Differences on SAPR Issues Within the Service versus Civilian Life

- **Overall, participants indicated they feel safer in the military than they would in the civilian world.**
 - *“I feel very safe. My own personal experience.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“I know I have [members] around me and I have leadership around me that will take care of me if something happened.” (O1–O3 Female)*
 - *“It's more of a brotherhood and a sisterhood. We take care of each other. And, definitely if we see somebody who's not part of us, i.e., a regular civilian, then we're obviously going to do something.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“They get no training [in the civilian world]. I think [the Service] does a better job than what's on the outside.” (E1–E4 Male)*
 - *“Being the only female sometimes [on deployment], there's always a male that would walk me back to my tent. I tend to feel more comfortable here than I would out in the civilian setting.” (E5–E6 Female)*
 - *“In the military, we have [SAPR] training. I do not necessarily, unless a bigger company in the civilian world, they're not getting the training. You feel safer and more comfortable here because the awareness is there.” (O1–O3 Male)*

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- *“When you do something, we literally have rules against it. Yes, in the civilian world, there are laws. But, it's just the people. Here it's, ‘No, there will be action; [and] you are suffering consequences.’ ‘You messed up and now it's time to pay.’ I believe we have better here than out there.”* (E1–E4 Male)
- *“I feel safe in my workplace. I feel like the people in my workplace respect me for my ranking, though it's small. And, just being a human. I like the people I work with. I'm sure it's not the same in other work centers, but mine is good.”* (O1–O3 Female)
- *“I think it happens just as often out there as it does in here.”* (E1–E4 Female)
- *“I think the consequences in the civilian world are definitely worse. In the military, I feel like there's more training than there is in the civilian world. I'm going to college now along with working, and I'm starting to see at school they're taking some of the things that the military is implementing and bringing them to schools and online and in the workplace. I feel like the civilian world is just behind on training. They're getting there.””* (E1–E4 Female)

Chapter 10: **Summary**

The *2015 Focus Groups on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Among Active Duty Members (2015 FGSAPR)* assessment was conducted to gather perceptions, insights, and additional information on how policies and programs addressing sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention and response affect those Service members these programs are designed to support. The perspectives of the focus group participants are invaluable in assessing how well the Department is doing with regard to these important issues and identifying areas where improvements could be made improve. These focus groups are a source of information for assessing these programs and evaluating the gender relations environment within the DoD.

The *2015 FGSAPR* is part of a newly directed annual assessment cycle of active duty members starting in 2015 that will consist of alternating surveys and focus groups. The assessment compliments ongoing assessments performed by SAPRO to assess the implementation and execution of policies and programs. The *2015 FGSAPR* specifically assesses participants' subjective reactions and provides data to inform and support SAPRO's mission; comments from focus group participants reveal how well they understand current SAPR policies and programs, their perceptions of these supports, and their general observations and suggestions for SAPR.

As noted in the introduction, the comments and opinions of focus group participants do not reflect everyone's opinions. Themes presented in this report were presented at the DoD level, indicating that support for each theme was voiced by participants in each of the Services. The supporting quotes included in this report address perceptions on: command climate/culture and the focus on sexual assault; reporting; professional retaliation and social retaliation; unwanted gender-related behaviors; changes in SAPR policy; prevention; and, training. The results cannot be generalized to all members. However, each idea put forth is worthy of consideration. In addition, the nature of unwanted gender-related behaviors is such that no one solution fits all situations.

Overall, participants provided both positive and negative perspectives on the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR). In general, participants indicated there has been progress in this area with increased trainings, education, and visibility from leadership on what is tolerated, not tolerated, and expected of military members. Participants did raise concerns about the potential for retaliatory behaviors against individuals who report unwanted gender-related behaviors (sexual assault, sexual harassment, or sexist/discriminatory behaviors), particularly among peer groups. They also recognized that social media may be a more common platform to take these actions as it provides anonymity at a time with leadership has made it clear that these behaviors are not tolerated.

These results give voice, in the participants' own words, to many of the statistical findings reported in the WGR surveys on the topics of sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender discrimination, and retaliation. As this alternative year survey-focus group assessment progresses, it is recommended that the focus group portion expand beyond the current CONUS locations and capture the views of military participants located in venues outside of the continental United States. That would provide a more comprehensive and complimentary look at

participants' views on sexual assault prevention and response, one that would align with the world-wide data captured on the WGR surveys.

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Appendix A.

Focus Group Protocol

Focus Group Protocol

2015 SAPRO Focus Group Protocol

Introduction to the Focus Group

Time for briefing and introductions: 5 minutes

Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____ and I represent the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). You are currently in the Focus Group session for [e.g., E1–E4 Men]. My colleagues with me this morning/afternoon are _____ and _____ also with DMDC. I have provided each of you with a handout.

Please turn to page 1. You can follow along while I share with you the purpose for this focus group and the ground rules we will follow.

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault prevention and response. We are conducting focus groups of active duty members as part of a new cycle of assessments directed by the Secretary of Defense. Similar focus groups are being conducted at installations across the country.

This is a **voluntary focus group**. If you prefer not to participate in this focus group, you are free to sit quietly while others participate, or to leave and return to your duties.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing focus groups. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on in the military, your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders and in turn it helps senior leaders make well-informed policy decisions.
- Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced sexual assault, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues across the military. You are the experts on what it's like to be a member of the military. Whether you *have* or *have not* experienced sexual assault is not a topic of this discussion. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership on the attitudes and opinions of the active duty military.

I want to thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group and go over a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know this is a very sensitive topic and you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. This is not a debate; there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you do not feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and _____ will be helping us to take notes. Also with us today is _____ from _____ who is here today to observe the sessions. He/she is here only to observe and will not disclose any information about the identity of any individual in this room during the session, the conduct of the focus group, or topics that were

discussed to anyone outside of the DMDC research team. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what _____ is typing.

- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, your supervisor's name, or your unit identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box on your handout.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Any questions?

I have several questions to ask you today, with a few subtopics in each. As the moderator, I will watch the time to ensure we cover all topics by the end of the session. I may have to change topics and maximize participation while respecting time constraints. This may involve an occasional interruption or skipping over some comments so we can progress onto the next topic. I will watch the time so we will be able to cover all questions by the end of this session at [give specific end time].

1. Focus on sexual assault

Time for Question 1: 10 minutes
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- a. I want to begin by talking for a few minutes about the culture within the [name the specific Service] regarding sexual assault. What is the general attitude among members here about the focus on sexual assault? Is sexual assault an important issue here? Is it taken seriously by all members—throughout the chain of command? Are there groups here where it is taken more or less seriously? [If asked, give examples of groups like junior enlisted members or junior officers.]
- b. Does sexual assault receive the same emphasis as other prevention programs from your leadership or at this installation? Among these areas [that you just mentioned], where does sexual assault fall in relation to the amount of emphasis it receives? How is that shown? Are there any aspects of these other programs (like alcohol, safety, or suicide prevention) that grab your attention? Describe. Could they be used to increase emphasis on sexual assault? Describe.
- c. Here is the broad definition of sexual assault—sexual assault includes a range of behaviors from unwanted sexual touching (for example, touching of areas like genitalia and buttocks) through completed sexual assault (for example, rape and sodomy) where threats or force are used to commit **without consent** these acts or where the victim is incapacitated or unable to consent. Are you familiar with this definition? If not, what do you think is intended? Is this how sexual assault is defined here? Is this how your training defines sexual assault? [Probe for differences.]

- d. [For senior level members—senior enlisted/senior officers] Think about your time in uniform and how sexual assault has been handled over time [if asked for examples of what “handled” means, say training, response to incidents, handling of cases/reports, treatment of victims and offenders, and level of emphasis/engagement]. Have you noticed any change in the way the [name the specific Service] or DoD deals with issues of sexual assault? Can you give examples of positive or negative changes? (If positive changes are mentioned, what has led to the positive change—are leaders more engaged in this issue? If so, can you provide examples? Are people more willing to intervene in a potential situation now more than they were in the past? When did you notice the positive change occur? Are there any other factors—to include emphasis by key personnel, such as commanders—that contributed to this change? If negative changes are mentioned, what led to them?)

Now let’s switch gears and talk about reporting sexual assault.

2. Reporting

**Time for Question 2:
10 minutes**

- a. There are two options for reporting sexual assault: restricted and unrestricted reporting. Unrestricted reporting includes access to medical treatment and counseling services, and it also triggers an official investigation by a Military Criminal Investigative Organization (CID, NCIS, and OSI). Restricted reporting permits access to medical treatment and counseling services, but does not trigger an official investigation or command notification of the assault. Are you familiar with these two types of reporting options? How did you learn about these two types of reporting? Do you think someone who experienced sexual assault would be more likely to choose restricted or unrestricted reporting? Why?
- b. For people who want to make a restricted report, who would they go to? What about an unrestricted report? Do you know the SARC/victim advocate [tailor to specific Service terminology] for your unit or on your installation? Do you think most people in your unit would know them? Do you think most people would know how to contact them? Would you talk to them about an incident of sexual assault? If not, why? Would you think most people in your unit would talk to them? If not, why? Would you trust them to handle a report properly? Why or why not? [If they state concerns, ask, “What would make you more likely to talk to them?”] Would they also be able to assist you in dealing with a report of sexual assault that most people in the unit know about?
- c. What more can be done to encourage reporting? How can the DoD/your Service encourage people to come forward?

3. Retaliation

**Time for Question 3:
10 minutes**

- a. I would like to shift the discussion now to a topic related to reporting sexual assault. Some members who experience unwanted sexual behaviors might not report it officially to DoD because they fear some sort of backlash for doing so. Would you see this happening? Without naming names, do you know of any situations where someone made a report and experienced something like that?

What specific types of actions/behaviors would be involved? What would motivate someone to do that?

- b. Retaliation may take different forms:
 - i. Reprisal: Taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, actions that affect a promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment; a performance evaluation; a decision on pay, benefits, awards, or training; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with the person's current situation]
 - ii. Ostracism (or social exclusion) and acts of maltreatment committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by other persons because the member reported a criminal offense.
- c. Did you know these behaviors are prohibited? What kinds of behaviors would you consider "ostracism" or "maltreatment" in response to reporting a sexual assault? Do you think either form of retaliation might occur here if someone were to report a sexual assault? Who would retaliate? Peers? Leadership? Are you aware that people can report retaliation against them? Who can take a report of retaliation? Do any of you use social media like Yik Yak? Have you seen anything on-line that speaks negatively about people who report sexual assault? Why do you think this happens?
- d. What can be done to keep either reprisal or ostracism from occurring?

Let's turn our discussion for the next few minutes to command climate and culture.

4. Sexual Harassment/Sexist Behavior

Time for Question 4: 15 minutes
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- a. I would like to start by discussing forms of unwanted behaviors other than sexual assault. There are behaviors that can be annoying or offensive, such as sexual harassment. To begin our discussion, let me briefly define sexual harassment. There are typically three types of sexual harassment—requests for sexual favors (for example, you do this for me and I'll do this for you; or if you do not do this for me, I'll do this to you), unwanted sexual advances (for example, repeated attempts from someone to get you to go out with them), and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that are severe or pervasive (for example, frequent inappropriate locker room talk or explicit sexual jokes). These behaviors are all unwanted and in some way are made to be either a condition of your job or these behaviors create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
- b. Are you familiar with that definition of sexual harassment? Were you aware such behaviors are prohibited by directives? [If not, what did you think made up sexual harassment?] What are the definitions your Service uses in trainings?
- c. Does sexual harassment have the same emphasis as other areas, such as sexual assault, use of alcohol, safety, gender discrimination, or suicide prevention? Among these areas [that you just mentioned], where does sexual harassment fall in relation to the amount of emphasis it

receives? [Probe for examples of emphasis in the other areas given in the example and ask how emphasis on sexual assault compares. How are other areas emphasized?]

- d. How well does your unit leadership lead by example? Do they say something when they witness a questionable behavior? Do they help set a standard of dignity or respect? [Depending on the responses, probe for good or bad examples.] Do they encourage supervisors to address questionable behaviors? How? Do they ensure that supervisors are educated and mentored in addressing these kinds of issues?
- e. Do you know how to report sexual harassment? Who would you go to if you wanted to make a report?
- f. What does your senior leadership say about sexual harassment? If someone were to report sexual harassment, would you trust leadership to protect their privacy? How could they do that? Would you trust leadership to treat them with dignity and respect? What does dignity and respect look like?
- g. Sexist behavior may constitute unlawful gender discrimination. Sexist behaviors are typically verbal comments directed at someone implying something negative about them due to their gender. For example, sexist behavior might imply that someone of that gender is not suited for a specific job or does not belong in the organization. Does sexist behavior occur here? What form does it take? Do people, such as your commander or supervisor, make an effort to stop sexist behavior? Does your training address sexist behavior?
- h. There is some evidence from surveys and research that indicates behaviors such as sexual harassment and sexist behavior are associated with sexual assault. For example, someone might engage in one of the verbal behaviors as a way to gauge someone's reaction, and then move on to more aggressive physical behaviors. Can you see that happening? Do you think someone might use such behaviors as a precursor to making more aggressive moves? [If needed, probe if they see these as grooming or confidence building steps toward more aggressive physical behaviors, or that unchecked behaviors act as a "green light" for misconduct in the unit.]
- i. How do you think someone would react if they were told their behavior was offensive-that is, their behavior was seen as sexual harassment or sexist behavior? Would they stop? Would they do even more? Do you think people would turn to other ways to continue offensive behaviors if they were confronted, like using anonymous social media sites? Would others criticize someone for calling someone out for harassing someone or making sexist comments? Are you aware of any policies? Do you think these are sufficient? Should the [insert Service name] have stricter regulations against sexual harassment? Against sexist behavior?
- j. [For senior level members] Think about your time in uniform and how sexual harassment has been handled over time [if asked for examples of what "handled" means, say training, response to incidents, handling of cases, treatment of victims and alleged offenders, and level of emphasis/engagement]. Have you noticed any change in the way the [insert Service name] or the DoD deals with issues of sexual harassment? Can you give examples of positive or negative changes? (If positive changes are mentioned, what has led to the positive change-are leaders more engaged in this issue? Are people more willing to intervene in a potential situation now more than they were in the past? When did you notice the

positive change occur? Are there any other factors—to include emphasis by key personnel, such as commanders—that contributed to this change? If negative changes are mentioned, what led to them?).

- k. Are there some people who exhibit these types of behaviors more than others? Do they come into the [Service name] with attitudes that offensive behaviors are acceptable or do they pick it up once they are in the [Service name]? Explain. If they come in with these tendencies, is there anything the [Service name] can do to screen them out? Any risk factors to look for? Do you have any suggestions for how the [Service name] could change ingrained attitudes? Have you seen examples where people did change?
- l. Do people use social media to sexually harass others or make sexist comments? How? What type of social media do they use (e.g., Yik Yak, Snap Chat)? Under what circumstances do you think people would make sexually harassing or sexist comments? Could these comments be made against someone for reporting a sexual assault? Do people discuss sexual harassment cases on these social media sites? Should there be policies against this type of harassment? Should your leaders monitor social media and take action if they see potential sexual harassment or sexist comments? What are the positive aspects of the use of social media? What are the negative aspects? Do you believe people might say things on social media sites they wouldn't say in person?
- m. In an effort to reduce sexual harassment and sexist behaviors, DoD has been working hard to improve culture leading to greater respect for each other. Have you noticed any new emphasis on reducing these behaviors? If so, what has been done? Have you seen anything specific that indicates the military as an organization has improved or is improving? [Probe into general perceptions of organizational improvements; ask for tangible examples without specific identifying information.]

Recently, there have been new programs established by the SAPR offices in response to the rates and reports of sexual assault. I am going to cover a few of them to find out if you have heard of them, and if so, what you think of them.

5. Changes in SAPR Policy

**Time for Question 5:
10 minutes**

- a. You told us earlier that you have training each year that covers sexual assault prevention and response. We would like to see if you are aware of the following recently implemented sexual assault prevention and response programs. For example, all four Services have created specialized attorney positions for sexual assault victims. These attorneys are called a Special Victims' Counsel or SVC in the Army and Air Force. [Navy and Marine Corps—this is called “Victims Legal Counsel.”] These lawyers are available to assist victims with the legal issues involved in a case. They are specifically trained to provide legal advice and representation to victims of crime. Have you heard of this resource? If you or someone you know were a victim of sexual assault, would this be a resource you'd find valuable or recommend? Why do you think victims would find having their own attorneys helpful?
- b. The DoD now allows victims of sexual assault to request an expedited transfer to another base/installation or to another duty assignment on the same base/installation when they make an unrestricted report. The request can be made for a variety of reasons including concerns

of retaliation, and the victim will receive an answer to their request within 72 hours of making it. Did you know this was an option for sexual assault victims? What do you think about this as an option for victims [probe for both positive and negative aspects; ask if this policy works well in all situations]? Commanders also are authorized to transfer the accused Service member in certain circumstances so the victim may not have to transfer. What do you think of this option? Do you think this is a useful tool for commanders to have? Why? If you knew about this option, where do you recall hearing about it?

DoD has many resources available for Service members who have experienced a negative behavior, but the goal is to prevent negative behaviors from being experienced in the first place. Here we want to talk about preventing unwanted behaviors by helping people identify risky situations and warning signs, and to help members watch out for each other.

6. Prevention

**Time for Question 6:
10 minutes**

- a. Thinking about a social situation (e.g., in a bar, at a celebration where alcohol may be involved), what types of behaviors would be considered to be a risky situation or a red flag leading to a potential sexual assault [if needed, provide potential red flags]? Do you think most military members would be willing to step in and stop a situation if they saw one of those red flags? How would they be perceived by those who are with them for stepping in? In the past we have heard that some people may not want to step in for fear they will be perceived as a “buzz killer,” or as someone who interferes with someone’s efforts to hook up. Has there been a change in this perception so that those who intervene are viewed more positively? Please describe. How do you think he or she would be perceived by leadership for stepping in?
- b. Now let’s think about a workplace situation where people may witness inappropriate workplace behaviors (like sexual harassment or sexist comments). At what point, if any, would someone feel like he or she needed to step in or say something to indicate that the behavior is unacceptable? If a person stepped in or said something to address the behavior, how do you think he/ or she would be perceived by others in the workplace? How do you think he or she would be perceived by leadership for stepping in?
- c. Is there any training that would help people identify risky situations for intervention? Is there any training that would help people deal with risky situations?

7. Training

**Time for Question 7:
10 minutes**

- a. We know that military members receive a lot of training each year on numerous topics. When did you first receive training on sexual assault prevention and response? What recurring training do you receive? How frequently? Who conducts the training? How has training changed over the years? Has it improved?
- b. Overall, what training did you consider to have been the most effective this year? Why? What training did you consider the least effective? Why? What kinds of training are least helpful? How would you improve it?

- c. Did you learn anything about sexual assault prevention or response in training this past year that you did not know before? Describe. Is there something you would like to know more about? Did your training change your mind or perspective on the topic? If yes, in what way?
- d. Sometimes details of sexual assault cases become known publically. How do people react when they hear about a case? Do they treat the victim any differently? The alleged offender? Does your training provide guidance on how you as a co-worker should treat a victim or alleged offender? How about your leadership? Do they say anything about how to treat victims or alleged offenders? For those of you who supervise people, do you provide guidance on how you are to interact with a victim and alleged offender? Does the training you receive provide guidance on what you are to instruct your personnel on how they should interact with a victim or alleged offender?
- e. [For senior level members] What do you tell your personnel about sexual assault prevent and response? What do you often hear about this topic from the other members of your units? Are there topics that the training does not adequately address?

8. Taking Gender-Relations Surveys

**Time for Question 8:
10 minutes**

We know that you are asked to take many surveys each year. We have a few questions for you about taking surveys.

- a. Typically, when we reach out to military members to notify them about surveys they have been scientifically selected to take, we contact them through mail and email. One of the options we have discussed would be to use text messaging. Would this be an effective way to reach out to Service members?
- b. Most of our gender-relations surveys are administered on paper and the Web (that has typically been accessible on computers). Would military members be willing to take these surveys on their smart phones or tablets? Is there a specific length that you think would be too long for a survey taken on a smart phone? What other ways can you suggest for the DoD to get feedback from you on these issues?

I would like to wrap up our session today with several final questions.

9. Additional recommendations for addressing sexual assault

**Time for Question 9:
5 minutes**

- a. Is there anything you wish someone had told you about dealing with issues of sexual assault when you first came in to the military?
- b. What more can the [insert Service name] do to help prevent sexual assault?
- c. One final set of questions has to do with your perceptions about military service.
 - i. How safe do you feel from sexual assault in the military? Do you know of anyone who feels differently?
 - ii. Do you think the military is serious about preventing sexual assault?
 - iii. Do you think the military is better or worse than other civilian organizations or institutions in dealing with sexual assault? Why?

- iv. Is there anything we did not ask today that we should have?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. As I mentioned at the beginning, we will treat all of your comments anonymously. There will be no attribution to any of you for the specific comments you made today. Please also respect that non-attribution when you leave here today. Our goal is to provide the best data possible and you have helped us greatly today with your comments and insights.

One last comment – on the last page of the handout you will see a list of resources available to you if you would like to follow up with us or have any questions. It also lists Department resources if you would like to talk further to someone about this study or any experiences you might have had with unwanted behaviors.

Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix B.

Handout for Participants

Focus Group Participant Handout

2015 FOCUS GROUP ON SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Handout for Participants

Purpose

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault prevention and response. We are conducting focus groups of active duty members as part of a new cycle of assessments directed by the Secretary of Defense. Similar focus groups are being conducted at installations across the country.

This is a **voluntary focus group**. If you prefer not to participate in this focus group, you are free to sit quietly while others participate, or to leave and return to your duties.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing focus groups. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on in the military, your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders; in turn, it helps senior leaders make well-informed policy decisions.
- Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced sexual assault, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues across the military. You are the experts on what it's like to be a member of the military. Whether you *have* or *have not* experienced sexual assault is not a topic of this discussion. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault. We do want to discuss these issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership on the attitudes and opinions of the active duty military.

Ground Rules for Discussion

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know this is a very sensitive topic and you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views — that's why we are here today. This is not a debate; there are no right or wrong answers, statements, or opinions.
- If you do not feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion. We will record comments, but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what the stenographer is typing.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, your supervisor's name, or your unit identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Or as we like to say, "What happens in the focus group, stays in the focus group." Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box on your handout.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- We have provided a list of resources as part of this handout if you feel uncomfortable or uneasy during the focus group session or after participating in the session, and/or if you are a victim of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, and we strongly encourage you to contact one of them if you do.
- Any questions?

Preserving the privacy and confidentiality of focus group participants is a fundamental principle for any successful data collection program, and the Department of Defense (DoD) Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) strives to maintain and protect the identity of every individual who participates in any of our data collection efforts. To accomplish this goal, DMDC uses procedures and protocols that protect respondent confidentiality to the extent permitted by all federal laws and statutes.

Participation in this focus group is voluntary; however, maximum participation is encouraged so that data will be complete and representative. The data collection procedures maintain the anonymity of all participants; no one from DMDC will know who has been selected by their respective Services and no record will be made of those who participate in any given session. Further, no comments will be kept in the written notes that could be linked to any individual participant. The risk to you is accidental or unintentional disclosure of any identifying data you provide during the session or other disclosures required by law. However, DMDC has a number of policies and procedures to preserve the anonymity of survey data and to remove all potentially identifying information.

There will be no collection or use of personally identifiable information (PII), and no one will be able to determine the responses of any given individual. Access to the unedited record of comments is limited to DMDC analysts and contractors under their direct supervision. In limited circumstances where an organization such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is performing an audit or analysis, the unedited record of comments can be shared to the extent disclosure is required by law. However, this has not occurred for any past focus groups that DMDC has conducted on this topic. In addition, no data can be used to contact a focus group participant or link responses back to a participant. Access to the edited record of comments where potentially identifying information has been removed is limited to Service senior leaders and staff working in sexual assault response and prevention activities, or as otherwise required by law. Selected comments that have had all identifiers removed will be included in the final report to illustrate findings. Finally, no audio or video recording will be done in order to further protect your anonymity.



We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit, please contact Dr. Paul Rosenfeld at paul.rosenfeld.civ@mail.mil, 571-372-0987 or DSN 372-0987.

You may also provide feedback regarding the focus group process or the focus group content by contacting a member of the DMDC team after the session or by sending us an e-mail at: SA-Survey@mail.mil.

If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy during the focus group session or after participating in the session, and/or if you are a victim of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to contact one of the following resources:

For confidential victim assistance, you may contact the Department of Defense Safe Helpline at 877.995.5247 or at safehelpline.org. Or, you may contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1.800.656.HOPE.

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